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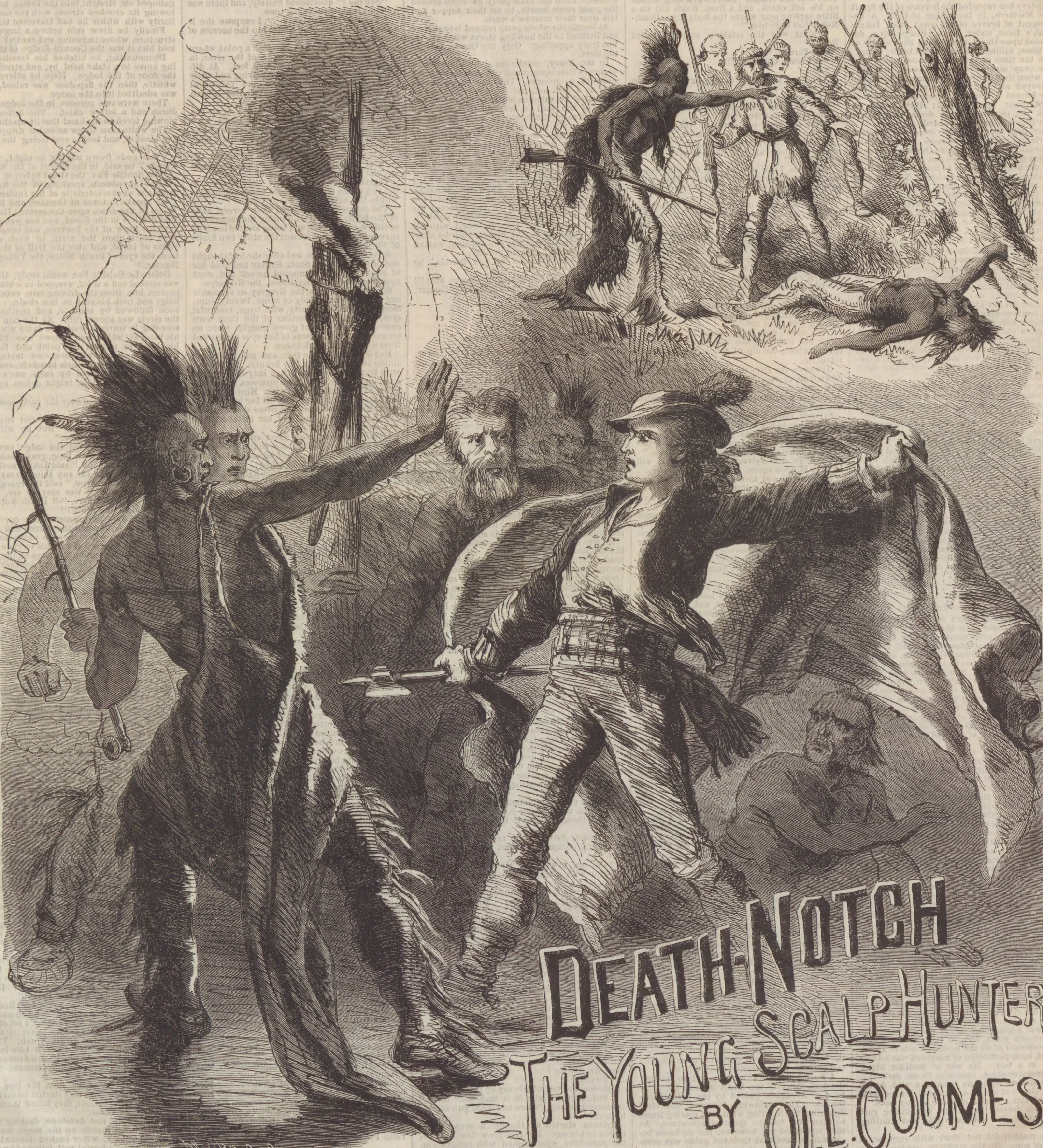
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Oil Coomes, author of "Ironsides, the Scout," "Boy Spy," etc., now writes exclusively for the Saturday Journal.



"DEATH-NOTCH" is my last and best. It is alive with the most startling scenes I ever wrote."—OIL COOMES.

"The destroyer is in your council-lodge! Behold him!" cried the supposed warrior, throwing aside his blanket. "I am Death-Notch!"

DEATH-NOTCH, THE DESTROYER: OR THE SPIRIT LAKE AVENGERS.

BY OIL COOMES.

Author of "Hawkeye Harry," "Boy Spy," "Ironsides, the Scout," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE LEAGUE OF EIGHT.

"Axos Meredith?"
"Here."
"Richard Carter?"
"Here."
"David Hawes?"

"Here."
"Phelix O'Ray?"
"Here, bedad!"
"Frank Harriott?"
"Here."
"George Olsen?"
"Here."
"Omaha, the Friendly?"

"Here."
"All are present," said the leader of the party, Fred Travis.
In fact it was unnecessary to call the roll to apprise that little band that not one of its members was absent. But it was done in observance of a code of regulations which they had adopted before setting out upon the trail.
All were young men, none being over three-and-twenty years of age, and two or three somewhat younger, but all like true sons of the border, were possessed of hardihood and strength, and their hearts were burning with a terrible fire of revenge.
Each one carried a rifle, a side tomahawk and hunting-knife, while from the bosom of their hunting-shirts peeped the polished pistol-butts. They stood beneath the umbrageous covering of an oak, each leaning upon his rifle and waiting the orders of his leader; but, ere those or-

ders breaking up their night's bivouac beneath the great oak tree, there suddenly came the sharp report of a rifle, followed by a low cry—the unmistakable death-wail.
The Eight Avengers gazed from one to the other with inquiring glances.
"Without a doubt another accursed red-skin has fallen," said Fred Travis.
"Yes; but who fired the shot?" asked young Hawes.
"Does the Omaha know?"
"Does not Death-Notch, the Young Scalp-Hunter, lurk within these woods?"
The Avengers started at mention of this name of one whom none of them but the young Omaha had ever seen, yet of whom they had heard most amazing reports. He was represented as being a youth of Titan proportions and power, cunning as a fox and subtle as a serpent—a deadly enemy to the human race, going and coming like one of supernatural powers and

bearing the heart of a fiend. Human lives and human scalps were said to be the sole object of his search; and that upon a thousand different trees in the forest bordering the Little Sioux river, might be found the totem of this mad destroyer—a notch cut with a tomahawk upon the trunk or limb of a tree, each notch representing a victim; and where the notch was found, there could be found also a decaying corpse or bleaching skeleton.
No wonder then that the Eight Avengers started when the Friendly mentioned the name of Death-Notch.
"Friend or foe," replied Travis, firmly, "we must do our work. Were Death-Notch twice the destroyer that he is, he must not stand in the way of our vengeance; nor shall he. Omaha, the duty devolves upon you to ascertain what that shot meant."
The Omaha at once glided from their midst

as silently as a shadow, while the band in perfect stillness awaited his return. A few moments passed when a low whistle was heard. "That is the Omaha's call," said Travis; "advance!"

The little band moved away in the woods, and soon came to where the Indian was standing within the shadows of a wide branching tree.

"What discovery, Omaha?" asked Travis.

The young Indian pointed at the ground. There, half concealed among the weeds and grass, lay the form of a Sioux warrior, dead and scalped. From a deep gash in the left cheek the warm blood was still flowing.

"Death-Notch has been here!" simply said the Friendly. "Behold his totem!"

Every eye was turned in the direction indicated, and upon the trunk of the tree near where the dead warrior lay, they saw a small notch, evidently cut with a hatchet, and so recently that the sap was still oozing from the wound.

The band stood for a moment silently before the dead warrior and the dread sign.

"Where is he?" at length demanded Travis.

"Ask the winds," was the Omaha's reply; "Death-Notch leaves no trail."

Not caring to fan the superstitious fears which it was apparent some of the band felt, Travis exclaimed:

"Well, trail or no trail, we must on to our work. So forward all!"

In single file the little band set off through the forest.

History has recorded the horrors of the Spirit Lake Massacre, in the spring of 1857. A detachment of braves of the great chief, Inkpaduch's force, under Young Sleepy Eyes, descended upon the settlements in the vicinity of the lake, killing and burning all before them.

At the time of the attack these young men were away several miles northward, hunting, but when they returned they found their homes destroyed and their friends all gone. Then they formed a compact which afterward rendered their names noted, they swore to track the merciless foe to death, and rescue their friends if any still existed.

For days they traversed the treeless prairie and trackless wilderness, guided by the never-failing and indomitable Omaha. And now, as they moved on, and the sun mounted higher into the heavens, the air became hot and sultry and the sky overcast with clouds. To the Avengers these were forebodings of a storm, still they pressed on, and when the sun stood upon the meridian, they stopped by a little stream to rest and refresh themselves from their meager supply of food.

While thus engaged the sharp clatter of hoofs broke suddenly upon their ears. The next instant a youthful horseman came galloping from the shadows of the woods and swept like a dart across the little valley before them.

The horseman was a mere boy. He could not have been over sixteen, and was as fair and delicate in features as a maiden. Masses of long dark hair fell in ringlets to his horse's back, and dark, lustrous eyes looked sharply from beneath their long silken lashes. A little red cap with a single white feather surmounted his head. A blue jacket handsomely wrought with threads of gold clothed the beautiful rounded shoulders, slender form and well-molded arms. The far lay open, revealing a full, snow-white chest and throat.

The only weapon he possessed was a small, silver-mounted rifle, which he carried in front of him across the withers of the raven-black pony he bestrode.

The youth, seemingly, did not see our young friends, but galloped across the valley and plunged into the woods beyond.

"Oh, but he's a royal lad," exclaimed young Ray. "Such a form; such hair; such eyes, oh, yes, Ray, the Howdy Mother, he must be a young god of the woods."

"He was a fine-looking youth," said Amos Meredith.

"A young ranger, I suppose," added another.

"Boys," said Fred Travis, "say what you may of that youth, I would venture my life, almost, on the fact that it is a female."

"Then," said Omaha, starting suddenly up, "if that is the case, Death-Notch is a female, for you have looked upon the face of that terrible young Scalp-Hunter!"

CHAPTER II. THE LOVERS.

A SCORE of log-cabins surmounting a bold stony bluff, overlooking the Little Sioux river, comprised the settlement of Stony Cliff. It had first been established as a small trading post by a party of French Canadians, and from year to year a family or two had been added to its population until it now numbered something like a hundred souls. Men had brought their families there and established themselves permanently, engaging principally in hunting, and the fur trade. A few, however, followed the immoral career of whisky-traders. Another kept a gun-shop and variety-store, and a few filled a number of acres of ground near the settlement.

Although Stony Cliff bore a disreputable name, as most all such frontier posts generally do, it was not entirely wanting in morals. It had passed laws of its own, established a school and church, and strenuous efforts were made to bring all within the pale of Christianity. But in this it had failed in many instances, as the progress of our story will show.

At noon on the same day that our story opens, a young girl stood alone upon the bank of the river, within the shadow of a clump of trees, less than half a league below the settlement.

She was not over seventeen years of age, tall, queenly and graceful in proportion, and fair and lovely in every feature. Before her upon the river a little canoe was rocking upon the waves, and in it lay the maiden's hat and shawl.

As she walked to and fro beneath the arching boughs of the trees, she would start occasionally and glance anxiously about her, but nothing meeting her gaze, a cloud of disappointment would settle upon her pretty face, and she would half-nervously and half-angrily twist and twirl the bouquet of wild flowers she held in her hand.

Was she there to meet some one? Was she expecting an unfaithful lover?

As the moments wore on, the sound of a foot-step broke suddenly upon her ears, and then the figure of a youth appeared from the shadows of the woods and stood before her.

He was a handsome lad, of not over eighteen or nineteen years, and, in spite of his youth, was possessed of all the developments of a man. Indeed, such perfection of manhood was seldom found in a boy. He was of medium height, with marked chest, muscular limbs, dark eyes that sparkled with the light of a wild, daring spirit, clear-cut features and a well-defined head, covered with a wealth of short, curly curls.

He was dressed in a clean, neat-fitting garb of a hunter, and carried a rifle and hunting-knife.

The maiden did not start with surprise at sight of him. On the contrary, her face lit up with a light of love, and, advancing toward him, she said, in a pleasant tone:

"Oh, Ralph! why have you kept me waiting so long?"

"I was not aware that I had, sweet Sylvien," he replied, in a low, pleasant voice, stooping and kissing her upon the warm, flushed cheek.

"Why, yes, Ralph! I have been here for more than an hour," Sylvien responded.

"I'm sorry I kept you waiting, my love, but then, if you will look at that shadow, Sylvien, you will see I am here at the appointed hour."

Sylvien Gray glanced at the shadow, and laughed softly.

"Oh, I know, Ralph; you are always true to me," she said, "but I am so impatient."

"You must try and grow out of that, Sylvien."

"I have tried, Ralph, but anxiety for your safety keeps me in a fever of excitement all the time."

"Do not, I implore you, dear Sylvien, keep your anxiety about me. It is my sole—the guiding hope of my future happiness, to know that you love me—that you are my own darling."

Sylvien. But, I would be still more happy did you know you were not fretting about my safety. Rest assured that I will not be so reckless of your happiness as to thrust my head incautiously into needless dangers."

"But, Ralph, you know," Sylvien gently persisted, "that Death-Notch, the Scalp-Hunter, is in these woods, and that he favors none in his terrible vengeance."

Ralph St. Leger smiled at the maiden's remarks, and replied:

"I have never yet seen Death-Notch, Sylvien, nor have I ever met a person that has seen him. Is he not a myth?"

"No, Ralph; several of the settlers have seen him at a distance," said Sylvien. "They said his face was that of a mere boy, but that he was a giant in stature."

Again Ralph St. Leger smiled. He was a youth whose education and natural good sense overbalanced all superstitious belief and reports, despite the fact that he was a borderman himself, a trapper-boy and free rover of the prairie.

"Well, dear, I may confess that there is such a person as he whom they call Death-Notch. I have seen his totem—the death-notch—upon a tree where lay a lifeless savage. But, I have reason to believe Death-Notch is the white man's friend."

"I wish I could only think so myself, Ralph, for just yesterday one of our settlers was found dead near the village. There was a deep wound on his left cheek, and a fresh notch cut on a little sapling near where the body lay. Death-Notch had slain him."

"What was the settler's name?" asked Ralph.

"El Pardon."

"A French Canadian?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps Death-Notch may have held some grudge against him?"

"I can not say, as to that," replied Sylvien, "but I do know that keeps Stony Cliff in a perpetual state of excitement."

"Not any more so, I suppose, than I understand he keeps the Indians," said St. Leger.

"Perhaps not; but Ralph, will you not consent to take up your head-quarters at the settlement?"

"Sylvien, I can not. I love the wild woods and its excitements, and I ask nothing more besides than an occasional interview with my darling Sylvien."

"That you shall ever have, dear Ralph, unless my uncle forbids me leaving the settlement."

"Has he threatened to do so, Sylvien?"

"No; but he knows I meet you, and of late he has intimated to me that he had chosen from his acquaintances a young man whom he thought would make me a good husband."

Ralph's brow darkened.

"Did he mention his name?" he asked.

"Yes; it was Scott Shirely."

"Well, Sylvien, he is handsome, dashing, young, energetic, yet I have no fear of him winning you from me."

"No, never, dear Ralph, and—"

She did not complete the sentence, for, at this juncture, the dip of an arched tree trunk, and the river they saw a canoe coming down upon the settlement. In it were seated two men, one of whom was Sylvien Gray's uncle and guardian, Abel Hatch, and the other Scott Shirely.

Sylvien started violently at sight of them, and turning to her lover she exclaimed:

"I will have to leave you, dear Ralph. You know uncle-Abel does not like you, and this meeting I desire to remain unknown to him."

"Yes, go, dear Sylvien. In two days I will be here at noon again. Good-bye, my darling!"

He stooped and kissed her, then turned and glided away into the deep shadows of the wood, while Sylvien entered her canoe, and started on her return to the village.

For several minutes Ralph St. Leger pursued his way untroubled through the woods, keeping within the deepest shadows. Finally he came to a little thicket of undergrowth, in the center of which stood a low, scrubby oak.

Pausing, he gazed carefully around him, then parting the shrubbery he entered the thicket, and was lost from view.

A few moments later, a powerful Indian warrior, with tomahawk in hand, crept from an adjacent clump of bushes, and half crouching, stole into the thicket directly on the trail of St. Leger. There was death in the basilisk eyes of the savage, and, as the moments wore on, a low, half-suppressed wail suddenly issued from the depths of the thicket. Then followed an ominous silence, which was finally broken by the sound of footsteps retreating from the undergrowth. And still, a few minutes later, another figure emerged from the woods beyond, paused and gazed with staring eyes upon the thicket. It was the figure of an Indian, but his face wore a pale, morbid, cunning expression. It was Omaha, the scout and guide of the Young Avengers!

For several moments he stood and gazed upon and over the thicket; then he placed his fingers to his lips, and produced a succession of peculiar sounds, and forth from the woods issued seven forms. They were those of our friends, the Young Avengers.

"What discovery, Omaha?" asked young Travis.

"A white youth entered the thicket. A powerful Sioux warrior followed him. A death-wail; retreating footsteps, and then silence. Death is in your bushes. Come!"

"The Friendly led the way into the thicket, followed by his white companion."

Under the drooping boughs of the oak they came to a halt.

"There!" exclaimed the Friendly.

All eyes were at once turned in the direction indicated, and saw, lying dead on the earth among the deepest shadows, the lifeless form of a Sioux warrior. He was scalped. Across the left cheek was a deep wound, from which the blood was still pouring in a hot current.

"Death-Notch has been here," said Omaha, and he pointed to a fresh notch cut on a low bough directly over the fallen warrior.

CHAPTER III. THE DESERTED HUT.

It was sunset. Ominous clouds were piled up against the western sky like the dark line of a giant mountain. Electric flashes shot along the craggy edges of the somber clouds, followed by the dull, sullen rattle of thunder. The wind was rising and raving in fitful gusts through the forest, shrieking like a demon over the hills and through the valleys.

A fearful storm was brewing, yet on through the dark aisles of the forest pressed the little band of Avengers, guided by the indomitable Omaha. The howling thunder, the vivid lightning, the howling wind and roaring trees, to them was but the spirit of adventure. As they continued on, however, the darkness became so intense that their red guide was compelled to resort to the moss on the trees in order to keep his course.

"This is getting to be tedious traveling, Omaha," said Fred Travis. "How far is it to the deserted cabin of which you spoke?"

"Not far," was the laconic reply.

The party pressed on in silence for nearly an hour after nightfall, when they came to the edge of a little glade. In the center of this opening, a prolonged flash of lightning showed them a log cabin, standing solitary and alone.

It was almost hidden from view by tall, rank weeds that grew to the very threshold, and which was evidence of itself that the building had not been inhabited by any one for years, save by bats and owls. Wild ivy clambered over the outer walls and over the roof, excluding the sunshine, thereby making it damp and moldy within. It was a desolated, deserted ruin, whose history was unknown to our party. Only Omaha knew, before that night, that such a cabin existed. In his wanderings abroad from the settlement over two years before, he had run across it.

Omaha led the way across the yard to the cabin in the great wilderness. The door stood ajar, and was swaying to and fro on its heavy wooden hinges, that creaked and groaned in an ominous and ghostlike manner.

After making a careful reconnaissance around the place to see that no enemy had preceded them to the inviting shelter, Omaha entered the cabin, followed by his friends. Their footsteps ceased dead on the damp puncheon floor, and their voices echoed hollow and sepulchral through the room.

By means in their possession a fire was hastily struck. Its light revealed a yawning fireplace in one end of the building, and in a very few minutes a roaring fire was burning upon the hearth, its cheerful light dispelling much of the gloom from the place.

The Young Avengers were now enabled to obtain a fair view of the interior of their retreat. It was a small, but comfortably furnished room, built of heavy logs or puncheons, as was also the floor. The building was divided into two compartments by straight-edged slabs set upright across the center of the house. There was an opening in the center of this partition that was used as a door, but was unclosed.

There was a rude table and some rickety stools in the room, and around the walls were numerous gun-racks, which gave evidence of the place having once been the house of a party of hunters.

The outer door was closed and securely bolted. Then the little party gathered around the great stone hearth, to eat their supper and talk over the events of the day.

At length the whole party relaxed into silence and listened to the howling storm without. It was truly appalling. Only the Omaha was on the alert.

The heavy, ponderous door there was a wicket which opened and closed with a strong slide set in grooves. This the young Indian used as a look-out, and there was scarcely an interval of ten minutes but a careful survey was made of the yard in front of the cabin, the broad light of a lantern enabling him to command a fair view of the glade.

The moments wore on, and finally every voice within the cabin became silent. This lasted several minutes, when all of a sudden Omaha started up, his feet and advancing to the door, opened the wicket and gazed out.

The Young Avengers were startled by this sudden movement. They knew that Omaha's sense of hearing was never at fault, and from his actions they believed he had detected the presence of some one lurking outside.

For a moment the Friendly stood with his face pressed close to the wicket, then he withdrew, closed the opening, and turning, walked slowly and calmly back to the fire.

"I have something to tell you, friends," he said.

"What is it? Has the storm blown over?"

"No; Death-Notch, the Young Scalp-Hunter, is at the door!"

CHAPTER IV. STARTLING INFORMATION.

AFTER his interview with Ralph St. Leger, Sylvien Gray entered her canoe and started on her return to the village.

She was at once discovered by her uncle, Abel Hatch and Scott Shirely, who were coming down the river, and who at once headed their canoe directly toward her. In a few moments they were alongside of her canoe.

Abel Hatch was a stern-looking man of some fifty years of age, with features and eyes that were not altogether pleasant in their expression. His companion, Scott Shirely, was a young man of some five-and-twenty, tall and handsome, but he possessed of a form and air that reminded one of a young and dashing cavalier of the Middle Ages.

His eyes were coal-black, as were also his long wavy hair and heavy mustache. He was dressed in a kind of flashy uniform, cavalry boots, and a broad-brimmed hat, from which a red plume hung down over his shoulder.

He was by occupation, representing, as agent, the Hudson Bay Fur Company. He made his headquarters at Stony Cliff. Here he had been for over a year, and had made the fur trade a lucrative one for the hunters and trappers that comprised the majority of the population of Stony Cliff. He also employed a number of sub-agents who traded with the Indians and hunters in the distant parts of the village. These agents were mostly French Canadians, and a rough set of men.

"Where now has my truant little ward been?" asked Abel Hatch, as they ran alongside of Sylvien's canoe.

Sylvien blushed scarlet, and before she could reply, or recover from her embarrassment, Scott Shirely said:

"Mr. Hatch, if you are going on down the river to your boat-trip, I believe I will return with Sylvien. I have no objections."

Before Sylvien could utter a protest against his intention, in case she had any desire to do so at all, the young fur-trader arose to his feet and stepped lightly into her canoe.

Then Abel Hatch drove his craft on down the river, and Sylvien and Shirely were alone.

"Sylvien, let me use the paddle," said the young fur-agent, seating himself before the maiden.

Sylvien yielded reluctantly to his request, for she would much rather have been alone with her own thoughts than in the company of Scott Shirely.

"I hope, Sylvien," he said, apologetically, "that my company will not be distasteful to you."

"Oh, no, not at all, Mr. Shirely," replied Sylvien with a slight tinge of sarcasm in her voice.

"I am quite fortunate, then, in dropping into your company," Gray times are very, very dull at Stony Cliff just now. If it was not for the little excitement kept up in consequence of Death-Notch's doings, and by the freebooters under the notorious Pirate Paul, I'm thinking Stony Cliff would become as dreary as a rainy day."

"Have you heard any new reports about Death-Notch to-day?" asked Sylvien.

"Nothing since poor El Pardon's death."

"And what of Pirate Paul?"

"He is said to be about," said Shirely, and he fixed his eyes upon Sylvien's with a strange light shining from their depths.

Sylvien, however, did not notice the expression.

"Who has seen him?" she finally asked.

"I have," replied Shirely.

"You? Is it possible? When did you see him, Mr. Shirely?"

"To-day."

Sylvien uttered a little cry of fear.

"But, Sylvien, you are a lover," continued Shirely, "does not visit you at your home?"

Sylvien started as though a serpent had hissed in her ear. Her face grew deathly pale, her cheeks blue, and she flashed with indignation, and her lip curled with scorn and disdain.

"What do you know, Scott Shirely, of my lover? Have you been eavesdropping like a—"

"Nay, nay, Sylvien," the young agent replied in a regretful tone. "If the truth be, whose duty it has been to keep on the alert. It is not generally known, Sylvien, that you have been meeting Ralph St. Leger in secret interviews; but why, Sylvien, does he not come to see you at Stony Cliff?"

"He has his own reasons for not doing so," replied Sylvien, disdainfully.

"Yes, indeed he has, Sylvien. He knows it would not be well for him to be caught in the village, for there are those there who would recognize him as Pirate Paul, chief of the prairie robbers."

"What!" Sylvien almost shrieked; "Ralph St. Leger, Pirate Paul?"

"As even so, Sylvien," replied Shirely, but the maiden was too much absorbed in her emotions to notice the latent meaning in his tone.

"Oh, my God!" she fairly moaned; "surely you are jesting, Mr. Shirely."

"I am not, Sylvien. I would not trifle with

the feelings of one so pure and honest-hearted as you. But, time will convince you that I speak the truth, and when your love for Ralph St. Leger has turned to hatred, then will I hope, myself, to gain that love which the young prairie freebooter has dared to gain."

"Mr. Shirely, I am ever so much obliged to you for this information if it is true, but, not until I know positively that such is the case, will I believe that one so manly and open-hearted as Ralph St. Leger appears to be, could be guilty of such a crime."

"The proof shall be given, in due time," replied the young fur-agent; "for over a month there has been a rumor on my track, consequently I know whereof I speak. But, Sylvien, let us talk of something more pleasant. Have you made the acquaintance of the new family lately come to Stony Cliff?"

"The family of the Gregory family, do you not?" asked the maiden, though her thoughts seemed to be far away.

"Yes," replied Shirely.

"I called yesterday to see them. They appear to be a fine people."

"There is a young woman in the family, is there not?"

"Yes; Miss Martha Gregory. But her health is very poor, and she is unable to be out of her room half the time. She seemed greatly shocked by the news of El Pardon's death at the hands of Death-Notch."

"She did?" questioned Shirely, and there was a little strangeness in his tone.

"Yes," replied Sylvien. "I suppose she is somewhat nervous and unused to the horrors of frontier life."

By this time they had reached a point where the bluffs rose up on each side of the river, in places to the height of a hundred feet. At different points the cliffs were shelving and their faces covered with crevices and parasitical plants of variegated colors that trailed in rich festoonery to the water's edge.

The young trader drove the canoe on up the river until he came to where the bluffs were less steep, and where a rude stairway had been chipped in the rock from the water's edge to the summit of the escarpment.

At the foot of these steps he permitted the prow of the canoe to touch. Then he leaped out, and, followed by the Gregorys, he ascended the stairs to the top of the bluff and there found themselves within the outskirts of Stony Cliff.

The cabins were scattered over several acres of prairie, the forest forming the eastern and southern boundaries, and being located in a bold curve of the river, it formed the other two limits of the settlement.

Sylvien went home, and after she had thought and cried over what Scott Shirely had told her of her lover, she composed herself and went over to see her new neighbors, the Gregorys.

She found Miss Martha Gregory an agreeable and amiable young lady of some twenty summers. She was very pretty, with large, mournful eyes, which a great portion of the time were closed by a pair of green goggles worn on account of the weakness of her eyes contracted from a late spell of sickness.

Her face was a little thin and pale, yet bore ample traces of its natural beauty. Sylvien at once became struck with her lady-like appearance, and gentle and affable manners. She spent most of the afternoon with Miss Gregory, and became so impressed with her in every respect, that, before she went home she had made a confidant of her, and told her all about her own troubles of that day.

Miss Martha expressed great surprise at Sylvien's story, and did all she could to assuage her sadness of heart. They talked on for some time, when Martha finally asked:

"Who told you, Sylvien, that Ralph St. Leger is the notorious Pirate Paul?"

"Mr. Scott Shirely, the fur-agent. Probably you have met him."

"Oh, yes. He is the handsome young fellow with the killing black mustache and red plume."

"Oh, I dare say all the young girls will be dead in love with him yet," and Martha laughed merrily.

Despite her sadness of heart, Sylvien laughed too, and admitted to herself that Martha was just such a girl as would make him happy around her.

"I have heard," Sylvien continued Martha, "since we came here that your uncle had chosen Mr. Shirely as a husband for you. Is it the case?"

"It is, Miss Gregory."

"And is there no way of averting your uncle's will, in this matter?"

"None now, Martha, unless it is proven that Ralph St. Leger is not Pirate Paul. While Abel is a very obstinate and selfish man, and I think he is actuated in this matter by capidity, for he has intimated to me that Shirely is a wealthy man—heir to a large fortune in Montreal."

Miss Gregory uttered a little cry of surprise, and Sylvien noticed the color come and go in her face, and saw her compress her lips as if to keep back an outburst of emotion. It was several moments before she spoke, then her voice was lower and more earnest in its tone.

"Sylvien," she said, "I must admit that I am a curious person; and now I am going to make a confidant of you, and it will all be for your own good. Our coming here is not without a purpose. My name is not Martha Gregory, but I have assumed that name because it is the name of the family I live with. Like yourself, I am an orphan, and I have been wronged as others are now trying to wrong you. But, I will prevent them; but you must know me only as the daughter of Peter Gregory. I can thwart any project your uncle may put on foot for your marriage with any one to whom you are opposed. Remember that. I will also tell you, Sylvien, that Stony Cliff and half of its men are at my mercy, though they know it not. And here," she continued, taking Sylvien's hand in hers, and slipping a beautiful and curious wrought gold ring upon her finger—"I give you a ring which will be a charm against prairie pirates."

Sylvien seemed not a little puzzled by her words.

"It is true, Sylvien, however absurd it may sound to you. Whenever any person sees that ring and starts and stares at it as one would at a ghost, mark my words, he is a prairie pirate! If he should inquire where you got the ring, tell him it was a present from a friend. But do not, I implore you, tell him you received it of Martha Gregory, nor repeat one word of which I have told you."

Though she was strangely impressed by Miss Gregory's words, Sylvien promised that she would not hint one word of what she had told her. But no sooner had Martha told her that the ring was a charm against prairie robbers than she became sorely impatient to try its reputed magic power upon Ralph St. Leger, whom Scott Shirely had asserted was the notorious Pirate Paul.

CHAPTER V. DEATH IN THE COUNCIL LODGE.

DEEP within the almost limitless forest, and compassed by rugged hills and bluffs, stood the Indian village of the notorious old Sioux chief, Inkpaduch, whose history has given a record that ranks with the bloodiest of savage chieftains.

From Springfield to Okibagi and Spirit lakes, Inkpaduch's minions under young Sleepy Eyes laid waste life and property indiscriminately. But when the neighboring settlements and military authorities pressed forward to chastise the barbarous foe, they fled from their old haunts and sought safety within the fastnesses of the woods and hills bordering the Sioux river, where we now find them, and where they remained until their final retreat beyond the Missouri.

The Indian village was some fifteen miles from Stony Cliff, and although the Indians and whites were on hostile terms, the former had never molested the settlers. Still, however, they had made many demonstrations of a threat-

ening character, and consequently kept the whites in a constant state of uneasiness.

Toward the Indian village, through a storm that was raging, a solitary horseman was riding at a furious speed. It was night, black and gloomy, rendered doubly so by the deep shadows of the forest through which lay his course. Now and then the lightning shot in vivid flashes down through the tree-tops and lit up his grim, bearded face.

He was wrapped in the folds of a water-proof blanket, and wore a broad-brimmed hat that was slouched to his shoulders. His hands and arms were drawn securely up under his blanket, giving the animal and vermin-like appearance that is his own course, which it did to his rider's satisfaction.

This was evidence of itself that the horse was well accustomed to the path it was following, and knew that behind the blinding darkness must have been of great importance, and why would he have ventured upon such a wild, stormy night as this?

On he galloped, now looming up like a Colossus into the lightning's glare, now fading away, as it were, into the blinding darkness that followed. But as he continued on, lights in the Indian village burst upon his view. A smile of joy passed over his grim, bearded face. He spurred on. A savage pikelet challenged him. He spoke a few words, and gave a low whistle by which he was known, and galloped on, straight into the Indian town, following its crooked streets with the same familiarity with which he had traversed the forest. Finally he drew reined up before a large council structure, whose imposing and central position told him it was the Council Lodge of the tribe.

Dismounting, he hitched his foaming, panting horse to a stake hard by, and strode up to the door of the lodge. Here he uttered a low whistle, and then the flap-door was raised, and he was admitted into the lodge.

There were two persons in the lodge, Inkpaduch and a fellow chief. The latter held a glowing torch in his hand that lit up the lodge. The white man threw aside his dripping hat and blanket, and took a seat facing the central lodge-pole.

"The gods from angrily to-night, my red friends," he said, in the dialect of the Sioux.

Replied Inkpaduch, the Great Spirit is angry. He speaks in tones of thunder, and hurls his darts of fire down upon the earth. He knows that death is in the forest, and has put a cloud over the brow of the heavens, and causes it to shed tears upon the earth, to wash out the stains of blood, and hide the trail of the Sioux from the eyes of Death-Notch, the Young Scalp-Hunter."

Before La Subtile Fox could reply, the door was opened and a chief came in, blanketed to protect him from the driving rain, entered the lodge and took his seat in the circle. He was soon followed by another, and another, until the circle was almost full. As the rain was descending in torrents, each came wrapped in his blanket, which was thrown horizontally over his head to protect his paint and feathered head-gear. Some of them, on taking their seats, did not remove their blankets, and could only be distinguished by each one's totem, which was wrought in bright colors upon his blanket.

Inkpaduch glanced over the party assembled and said:

"My young chiefs are all in but one. Red Antelope is still absent. But he will come soon—ugh, he is here now!"

Red Antelope entered the lodge, enveloped from head to foot in his long, gray blanket.

"The council is full," said Inkpaduch; "let any one speak who has any thing to say."

"Then I will ask you," said the renegade La Subtile Fox, who it was easy to see wore a mask of false whiskers, "if Death-Notch has been in your camp again?"

"No; he dare not come within our village. But he prowls through the woods and strikes my braves down when they go alone to the deer. Go where you will, his terrible death-notch may be seen upon the trees of the forest. And to-day comes the wall of another of my warriors whose cheek bears the totem of the Young Scalp-Hunter."

"Death-Notch is a terrible creature," said the white renegade; "but let the chief prepare, for another enemy is approaching."

"Let La Subtile Fox speak." His voice is strong in the council."

"Well, a band of eight persons, young men, strong and brave, and calling themselves The Spirit Lake Avengers, are in the woods. They come to avenge the death of their friends slain by you at Okibagi and Spirit lakes. Omaha, the white man's friend, is with them."

The brow of the chief became clouded, and his eyes flashed with a revengeful fire, while a low exclamation escaped the lips of his companions, and their breasts heaved with emotions of revenge.

"Let the young Omaha sing his death-song," the old chief at last broke forth; "the blood of a hundred of his friends reddened the snows of last winter, and their scalps are drying in the lodge of the Sioux. Sleepy Eyes, with a score of picked warriors, are upon the trail of Death-Notch. They will meet the Omaha and his white friends in the forest, and when they return they may bring the scalps of these Avengers as well as that of the terrible Death-Notch."

"Light!" ejaculated one of the savages in the circle of forms. It was Red Antelope, who still kept his face concealed with his blanket.

"Why does Red Antelope grunt?" asked the head chief, turning upon the savage with an indignant scowl.

"Does he mean my questions by muttering the totem of Death-Notch upon the central pole. Is he a coward—a weak squaw? Does he fear Death-Notch? Let him speak!"

"Inkpaduch," said the shrouded Red Antelope, in a tone that caused the counselors to start, "you ask me questions, but you do not do the same for me. Red Antelope lies dead on the outskirts of your village by the hand of Death-Notch. The destroyer is at hand. He is even here in your council-lodge! Behold him!" cried the supposed warrior, flinging aside his blanket; "I am Death-Notch!"

A cry of terror pealed from

THE UNLOVED.

BY G. H. HORN.

A lonely one stood by his gate,
Upon a summer's eve;
He gazed upon me, wistfully,
Before he took his leave!

He was not fair—in fact, he was
Somewhat of a tawny hue;
Such as in youths of tropic climes
We oftentimes may view.

His eyes were dark and very bright,
A costly gem he wore;
He did not wear it haughtily,
To tempt the needy poor!

He was unloved, although his form
Was cast in Nature's mold;
Though art to him could add no charm,
No fresher tint unfold!

Some slanderous tongues have whispered loud,
He is to vice inclined;
I neither can, nor will believe,
He has a vicious mind!

His gait, 'tis true, is rather queer,
He seems by impulse moved;
With all the gifts I just have told,
How little is he loved!

Ah, yes; I own he is not an
Apollo Belvidere!
His movements are a little brusque,
As urged by hope or fear!

Whom do you think, this black-eyed wight?
Before you answer—wait!
I'll tell you now—or have you guessed?—
A TOAD beside my gate.

The Red Scorpion:

THE BEAUTIFUL PHANTOM.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "FLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK CREST,"
"HOODWINKED," "HERCULES, THE HUNTER,"
"PEARL OF PEARLS,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

THE gloom of death hung over Birdwood. Not a face but told of grief at loss of little Eddy—so loved was he by all that household.

His death was so sudden and from such peculiar ailments as to baffle, while it puzzled, the physician in attendance.

There was a burning fever, a delirium in the brain, together with a palsied limpness of arm and limb; the veins were swollen beneath the parched skin; yet, what the sickness, or its cause or cure, could not be decided.

Without a farewell word, the soul had sought that realm of glory bourned beyond the skies—and Eddy slept.

Karl Kurtz seemed overwhelmed with an unutterable woe. The child was a very idol to him—loved, cherished, guarded with a jealous fondness; and now, to be snatched away, when the young life was budding in all its freshness—healthy, vigorous, smiling for those whose chiefest pleasure centered in its promises of perfect manhood.

But there was one who shared not in the sorrow of the hour; there was one who did not mingle tears of sympathy with others.

Vincent Carew, grim and devilish, watched the result of his dark doings with a hypocrite's exterior, while in his heart he laughed, and called on the departed spirit of Antoine Martinet to witness the fulfillment of his vow.

"I have paid the price demanded," he would mutter, more than once. "And now, let Karl Kurtz look to himself; for if he tempt me, the end of shade is not yet at Birdwood."

"I think, Mark Drael, we'd better adjust this at once. I am tired waiting."

The human vulture stood like a scowling demon before his cringing victim; and Karl Kurtz, trembling and weak, shrunk back under the glitter of the dark gray eyes.

"Vincent Carew, will you not wait?"

"Not another hour! Have I not said I am tired waiting? When you asked me, one week ago to-day, to give you time under your affliction, I granted it. I feel that I have already been very lenient. You must go to town this morning. When you return, bring the deeds with you. You know there's no telling what might happen—you might die, and then I will have come all the way from England on a useless errand."

"Yes, yes—I wish I was with Eddy! I wish I lay in the grave—"

"Oh, no, you don't," interrupted Carew, with a grim smile. "You know you're not fit to die, Mark Drael. But, don't stand here wasting time. Hurry to the city."

"Again I ask you to wait. Give me time to recover from the loss of my child. Have you no mercy?"

"Mercy? Look ye, Mark Drael: I could take from you every penny you own, and cast you out into the world, to mope along in beggary. Am I not right?"

"Yes—God help me!" replied Kurtz, in faltering accents.

"Very well. Considering I have only asked you to transfer Birdwood to me, place \$50,000 to my credit in bank, and guarantee me the hand of Lorylyn St. Clair in marriage, I think I have been very reasonable. Your wealth will not suffer in granting these, nor will your reputation. Obey, and all will be well; refuse, and—"

"Stop—spare me your threats. I am going—I'll go." And he turned away.

As he ascended the stairs, however, his eyes brightened with a momentary flash.

"Not long, Vincent Carew!—not long! I'll cheat you in the deeds, and then in three days, you'll be dead!" He placed his hand to his breast pocket as he spoke, where he carried the vial given him by Cale Fez; and as he clutched the little thing, he seemed to gather strength. "But," he added, "I will not, even then, be free! Thaddeus Gimp demands a salary of me, in consideration for his secrecy regarding Antoine Martinet. What does he know of Antoine Martinet? I care not for the money, but possessing such knowledge as he may, he is dangerous. Ah! Robert St. Clair, you are growing desperate indeed! Though, it can't be helped; I must save myself—yes, though it cost a score of lives, I must save myself!"

Vincent Carew entered the parlor, where he pulled the bell-rope.

"Tell Miss St. Clair I wish to see her," was his order.

In a few minutes the servant returned, with

"Miss St. Clair says she don't want to see anybody, sir."

"Go back and say I must see her."

"Yes, sir," and the man departed, wondering who this stranger was, that frowned so much, strutted arrogantly about, and took upon himself so many airs.

The second message brought Lorylyn to his presence.

It was the same proud, ice-like, beautiful girl she ever was, that swept in and faced him with haughty inquiry; and her lustrous orbs lost their dreamy brilliancy in a brighter, flashing gaze, as she confronted him who had said she "must" grant an interview.

"Well, sir, please state what it is you desire."

"Partly to feast my eyes on your beauty—"

"Sir!"

"And partly on a matter of business," he concluded, without noting her quick interruption.

"Perhaps," she said, "you can see that I dislike to converse with you. Therefore, the sooner you have done the better."

"And why should you form this dislike? You have seen but little of me—"

"You are detaining me for a trifle. Why do you wish to see me?"

"Tell me, Lorylyn St. Clair, what it was that startled you on the piazza, a week ago, when you fled from me?"

Calmly she stood; yet, the question had sent a wild, ungovernable thrill to her heart, which almost checked its pulsations.

"Tell me," he reiterated, as she remained silent.

"I will not."

"You will not?"

"I have said, 'I will not.'"

He saw it would be useless to question further. Her words were unmistakably decisive.

"Then," said he, endeavoring to appear indifferent—though he would have given an arm to get at the information he sought—"we will say no more of it. There are other matters equally important, to which we will turn our attention."

"Speak on, sir."

"You must divine that I had an object in coming to Birdwood."

"For the sake of brevity, we will admit it."

"That object was yourself."

"Ah!"

"Ay, Lorylyn St. Clair—his eyes burning with the fierce passion that had seized him—"you. I love you in a way that would madden other men! You must be my wife!"

"Marry you?" Her face was rigid, as if carved of marble, and as icy; but there was an indescribable accent to her voice, which, at least, bespoke some mysterious horror.

"Never!" she exclaimed. "Are you mad?"

"Call it madness if you will. But, I say you shall. Vincent Carew is not a man to be turned aside by one refusal, nor a dozen, nor by the fact that you may despise him. I am here to become your husband!"

She wondered at his insolence; she wondered why she stood there, listening to such language!

"Karl Kurtz will tell you," he went on, in a hurried way, "that, if you do not consent to this, I will hurt him, battered, hopeless, and crime-branded, on the world! You must marry me, to save him. You love him—your uncle? There is a power at my call by which I can sow ruin and desolation round you! Where peace and plenty now reign, I can bring down disgrace and famine! And these things I will do, if you do not be my bride! You hear, Lorylyn St. Clair? Do you understand?"

Fierce was the mien of this terrible lover; consuming with fires that could only light in such breasts as his, he glared upon her, and one hand clenched as he poured forth his chilling threats.

And Lorylyn St. Clair did then what she had never done before—yielded to the tumult of her thoughts.

Her form quivered in painful excitement—painful because she read in Vincent Carew's face the warning of a dark destiny closing in upon her; and this excitement was doubled by a great dread, or suspicion, that had fastened on her mind the day she had first seen him, when she heard him cry out the words: "The Phantom! The Phantom!"

Her lips were compressed till their ruby color fled; the whiteness of her face was deadly; and words, that sprung to answer the hot speech of her rough suitor, were deadened to an inaudible whisper.

Carew would have spoken again, with scarce a pause; he was warmed to the utterance of anything to show her the determination of his love—if love it could be titled. But, at that instant, his gaze rested on the draping folds of the curtains near the window, and, in a trice, his whole manner altered.

He had caught the outline of a form there.

Then to the bottom of the curtain his eyes wandered. A pair of feet were visible. There was no mistaking the long, narrow, pointed gaiters, with steel buckles and ribbon. He knew that Dyke Rouel was hiding and listening.

A slight rustle called his attention again to Lorylyn. She was gone.

With an oath on his lips, he strode after her. The interview had not yet concluded to his liking.

At the door he came face to face with Oscar Storms.

Thaddeus Gimp was entering the hall; the two had just arrived.

Hardly deigning to notice him, Carew would have pressed on to overtake Lorylyn, who was continuing her flight up the stairs.

But the young man stretched out an arm and said, sternly:

"Hold!"

And, in the same moment, Dyke Rouel, noiseless and quick, glided from his concealment and leaped out at the window.

CHAPTER XII.

THE two men regarded each other with frowning brows.

Gimp, marking in their attitudes a prospective collision, grinned and stood silently by.

"Hold?" repeated Carew, in sharp inquiry.

"Ay, hold. You are in pursuit of Miss St. Clair. Why?"

"What's that to you?" snappishly, and making a movement to pass on.

But Oscar resolutely barred his way.

"It's more to me, perhaps, than you imagine. Even were it a matter of no unusual import to me, I would be little of a gentleman did I hesitate to assist a lady in avoiding the society of one who is detestable—and you must be detestable to her, when she is forced to run from you."

The expression of contempt conveyed in the words of the speaker, cut the scowling villain to the quick.

"Stand aside!" he snarled, his face purpling with rage.

"No, I'll stand where I am—until I warn you to keep away from Lorylyn St. Clair."

"And how long since you assumed the position of her guardian?" with a sneer that blended in his angry voice.

"Now you may pass," said Oscar, stepping aside, when he felt assured that Lorylyn had had sufficient time to gain her room.

Carew met his keen glance with a lowering eye. Twice had his fists doubled to strike the young man; but, something stayed him. Perhaps it was that he saw in Oscar Storms one who was fully his equal, man to man.

His utterance was harsh, grating, husky with anger, as he cried:

"You'll regret this!"

He strode past; then he paused, turned, and hissed, menacingly:

"We are enemies! Look to yourself! You'll hear from me!"

"Better an enemy than a friend in such as you!" retorted Oscar, contemptuously.

"And as to hearing from you—you'll find me at your service whenever you desire it."

"And I'll second him," added Gimp, in a tantalizing voice, while he swung his cane, nodded his fat, ball-like head, and permitted that occasional twinkle of the pale-blue eyes.

Growing and gnashing his teeth, Carew went out to the piazza.

Dyke Rouel was ascending the steps.

"You here!" he exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Why, maester?" and Dyke wriggled his brows and stared blankly.

"Basel—you were in the parlor behind the curtains, not a moment since."

"I, maester?" He looked as if he would let fall the box he carried, so well affected was his surprise.

"Yes, you. Why were you listening?"

"No, maester, I—"

"You lie!" interrupted Carew.

Dyke bowed low—but it was to hide the resentful glitter that came into his eyes, and not in meekness, as one would suppose.

"Go to the stable, and bring me a horse."

Carew's mood changed abruptly. He wanted to be alone. His encounter with Oscar Storms vexed and troubled him. It troubled him in that he had promised the young man a "future." A duel—though, with his bold, bad, reckless nature, he did not shrink from it—might result in injury to him; and to be rendered in any way helpless, at that critical period, was to court a ruin of his plans.

He knew that Thaddeus Gimp held some knowledge of Antoine Martinet; he knew that Oscar Storms held some power over Karl Kurtz—he had heard enough to convince him of these facts. And why, if not to exercise their strangely acquired powers to an end of self-benefit, were these two men coming so regularly to Birdwood of late?

Storms, too, would aspire to the hand of Lorylyn St. Clair, and was using his mysterious power to further his aims.

Such musings as these tangled in his brain and made him regret the hasty words in the hall. He must needs be alone, to calm himself and plan for action accommodable to his situation.

Dyke Rouel soon came back, leading a magnificent steed.

"I will return shortly," he said, as he gained the saddle; and then he started off at a brisk gallop.

Again that peculiar expression rested in Dyke's face, as his gaze followed Vincent Carew.

So, he mused, aloud, "he now begins to call me 'maester.' It has been 'fool,' and 'rascal,' and 'dog,' until I have itched to spring at his throat and tear out the tongue that has abused me ever since the night he made me go down on my knees and speak the fearful oath to serve him so long as I should live. That night—" Dyke shuddered and said no more.

Entering the house, he proceeded upstairs to the room occupied by himself and master.

When he had disappeared, the front door opened slightly, and Thaddeus Gimp came out from behind it.

"Now, may I be hanged!—no, no, not exactly that, either. But, that fellow is playing a part. I see it plainly. He changed, after his rascal of an employer went away, just like magic! I've found out two little secrets of this pair, and may I never taste another 'sang' if I don't get at that fellow's actions!"

Lorylyn, when she fled from the parlor, hurried straightway to her room.

At the first landing she sensed a shadowy figure, which shrunk back before her, as if to avoid her gaze.

She did not see it, and continued on. When alone in her boudoir, she sunk into a chair and covered her face with her hands.

Her breath came quick and fast; she trembled as if fresh from the ordeal of some biting terror.

This was a strange part for Lorylyn St. Clair—she, who, of all the enigmas of society, was noted for her icy self-possession.

Suddenly she arose and crossed over to a small desk, and from this she extracted a roll of parchment.

Opening the roll, she began to read, while the hazel orbs were fairly scintillating in excitement. Presently she reached a paragraph, for which she evidently searched, and, measuring the words in a breathless tone, quoted to herself:

"This Phantom, my child, can appear to none save those whose veins are colored with the blood of the Carews. You are the only surviving member—with one exception, which I will tell you of. My first marriage was with a man whose name was the same as mine—Carew."

We had a son, who, at an early age, was sent to a college in Europe. While he was there, my first husband died. Then I was married again—this time, a Kurtz. We had a child, whom we called Lorylyn. You are that child. My boy, for some rash act, was expelled from college, and I never heard of him since that time. It was when you were five years of age, I answered his letter, telling him about you, and begging him to come home. And that was the last tidings. Owing to disagreements, I separated from my second husband. Shortly subsequent I changed your name from Kurtz to St. Clair. If my first child be living, then you and he—half brother and sister—are the only ones who can see the Phantom that has followed our line through countless generations."

When it appeared to one, it appears to all, no matter how far apart they may be, and its warning is of danger to some member of the family."

Mechanically she returned the manuscript to its place, and then, while she stared vacantly down at the carpet, she panted:

"This is why I saw it months ago! This is why I have seen it so frequently of late—twice on the night of Vincent Carew's arrival. Ah! the guests would have thought me a madwoman, had I told them the cause of my swoon! Oh, Heaven! for strength and thought to act! This dark man must be the child my mother mentions; his name

is Carew, and I have heard him cry out as if at the presence of the Phantom! He is—

—he is my half-brother, and the Phantom's warning meant that he would seek to make me his wife! But he must not know—he must not learn what tie there is between us! And he threatens! I feel that he is using some dark power over my uncle! Oh, for a plan—a plan—is there no way to defy him? Uncle must not be a victim to his heartless nature! Lorylyn St. Clair, you are not yourself! No, this is a wild, torturous moment in your life!"

She pressed her hands against her violent-throbbing temples, and swayed to and fro as she sought to force a thought into her harassed brain, by which to escape Vincent Carew, without discovering the relationship she bore him, without bringing destruction on her uncle.

She scarce heard the light knock of some one at the door.

"To see you, Miss Lorylyn," said the maid who entered, and she handed Lorylyn a card.

"OSCAR STORMS," was the name she read.

As though the card had come in answer to her prayerful petition, her face brightened, and going to her desk, she snatched up a pen, bidding the girl wait.

The figure which Lorylyn had passed at the head of the stairs was Karl Kurtz.

He had been a listener to the dialogue in the parlor. Waiting until Carew had gone out, and Dyke Rouel was well past him, he descended.

Thaddeus Gimp was just emerging from behind the door.

The lawyer saluted him pleasantly, seemed cordial to an extraordinary degree.

"Ah, Mr. Kurtz!—good-day. How do you do?"

Kurtz mechanically took the extended hand.

"You'll pay me the first installment to-day, eh?" continued Gimp. "Going to town? I see you're fixed for a ride. Ah, me! don't forget now; count me yours truly."

"I will attend to your matter, Mr. Gimp."

"Ah, thank you," and as Kurtz turned away, the lawyer added, mentally:

"Devilish lucky, I am! Now how easy it would be for him to mash my plans into spoiled cake, if he only refused to give me the money! Why? Because I haven't any more idea what he has to do with Antoine Martinet, or what Antoine Martinet has to do with him, than the man in the moon! Fast!"

He found Oscar nervously pacing the carpet.

"Ah, Storms!—waiting?"

"Yes."

"Sent your card up?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll—"

The return of the maid who had been dispatched to Lorylyn, interrupted.

She handed the young man a slip of paper, and then withdrew.

A surprised expression overspread his face as he read:

"Remain at Birdwood. I can not see you now; but meet me to-night at eleven o'clock, in the grove to the left of the house."

"LORYLYN."

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Birdwood was far behind him, Vincent Carew checked his horse and allowed the animal to fall into a slow walk.

He was riding along a forest path, where the dense foliage of the interlacing trees formed a verdurous dome above him, and the air that trembled in the cool shadows were those of deepest solitude.

With head hung forward, heedless of his course, he permitted his thoughts full sway—and they centered on two things alternately: Oscar Storms and Lorylyn St. Clair.

In the first he saw a rival whose presence was dangerous, even though he had heard Lorylyn bid him say no more to her of love; and in the beautiful girl—whom now he was worshipping with all the fierce, unholy passion of his soul—he had met that which plunged him in most vexatious tanglement of mind.

The scene on the piazza was fresh in his memory; the words, the cry that came from her lips, preyed in a strange way upon him.

She had shrunk before that which, her utterance betrayed, was some Phantom shape; she had refused him any explanation that might have cleared the haze that formed in his reveries; and as his meditations lengthened, an unaccountable feeling, as of some approaching crisis, took possession of him.

Slowly along the forest path the horse continued, as if mindful of his rider's pensive mood. The rein hung neglected, and Vincent Carew marked not which way he went.

Suddenly the intelligent animal stopped, then shied. Before him in the path stood a man whose abrupt appearance, from behind a tree, roused Carew from his musings.

"Hold!" said this intruder on his solitary ride, raising one hand with a motion of command.

It was a negro.

"Who are you?" regarding him curiously.

"I am called Cale Fez," was the reply, fixing his keen eyes steadily to Carew's gaze.

"And why do you stop me?"

"Because I would have a word with you."

"Ah!—of what?"

"Your business here."

"Here?"

"You are at Birdwood, stopping with Karl Kurtz."

"How do you know it?" a natural question.

"There are few things of worth that I do not know," answered Fez, meaningly.

"I have waited for this meeting."

"And why is my presence here of import to you?" Carew's voice was assuming its habitual sharpness, and he frowned slightly.

"That you shall learn—if you have money to pay me for valuable information."

"What does this mean?" Carew asked himself; and then aloud: "You have business—"

"I have," interrupted Fez, in his calm, whispering voice.

"To what does it pertain?"

"Your life."

"Ha!"

"Start not—listen: I am called a strange man, and maybe I am, for I possess secrets

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Special Notice to Newsdealers.

The enormous quantity of Circulars required for supplying the Trade of the ENTIRE COUNTRY with the Advance Chapters and Announcements of Old Coomes' great story of "DEATH-NOTCH," has, in some cases, compelled us to send dealers a less number for distribution than we would have wished; but, enough have been sent to each and all to introduce the story pretty thoroughly in each locality.

"It being one of the best of its kind ever published, and the supplement unusually attractive, we are certain that, if used at once and judiciously, it will more than double your sales on the JOURNAL. Such a use, of course, will greatly increase the business of the Newsdealers, as we aim always to do in putting out our Circulars and Bulletins.

We also send posters, which please display conspicuously.

If you do not receive a supply of quarter sheets, or if your name or address is not correct thereon, please notify us at once.

You will oblige us by making your orders on the SATURDAY JOURNAL agree with your sales, thus enabling us to print and furnish promptly, that you may meet the demands of your trade.

The SATURDAY JOURNAL having an independent field of its own, increases with great rapidity in circulation, with less effort than any other popular weekly, making it the favorite with the trade, a proof that the publishers know what the public want.

BEADLE AND ADAMS, Publishers,
98 William Street, New York.

Our Arm-Chair.

Chat.—Vassar College is a great success. We were present at its recent opening, and were amazed at the crowd of applicants for admission to the Freshman Class. Over one hundred more than the college could accommodate! Surely this speaks volumes for woman's progress. The college was founded to give her a sound scholarship, and that so many are eager for the ordeal of hard study makes us wish for more Mathew Vassars! Oh, if some of the rich men we could name would put their immense wealth to such noble uses, how many would rise up to call them blessed!

—James R. W., in writing, says:—"I was first made acquainted with the JOURNAL through the kindness of a friend, and a perusal of its late issues convinces me of its usefulness in the family circle, its excellence is surprising." To which we say to other friends of the JOURNAL, "Go thou and do likewise."

—The postal laws are in a chronic state of disquietude. Hitherto all MSS. for publication came to us prepaid at "book rates." Now all that is abolished, and all MSS., other than actual book manuscripts, have to prepay full letter rates. And the law making this change expressly stipulates that all MSS. underpaid in postage shall collect the amount so underpaid at the office of delivery; but now comes the P. M. General with a "decision" which sets all this aside; for he says that the office of delivery shall collect twice the amount of postage underpaid. Of course this is wholly illegal, since there not only is no warrant for it in the law itself, but it actually sets the law at defiance; for the postage so collected is in excess of full letter rates. But, who can defy a "decision?" Our correspondents have but one safe course to pursue—to fully prepay every communication to us, no matter what its nature. We cannot take from the postman packages which have on their wrappers the unpleasant reminder of "the due," "the due," etc., and all such must go to the Dead-Letter Office—in some cases greatly to the author's loss.

A New Reform.—The Woman's Movement, as such, having become rather threadbare, we are not surprised to see another "reform" agitated. We learn from a correspondent that he proposes to canvass the state of Indiana, to set in motion the somewhat odd "reformation" indicated in the following prospectus:

THE SOCIAL AND MORAL REFORM LEAGUE.
WHEREAS, Mankind have been placed by their Creator in relations involving social laws, and he has given expression of his will in reference to their conduct. We deem it our highest good to consult Scripture and reason, and conform to their teachings. We believe the present styles in dress and living are, in many particulars, destructive of piety, health and comfort, and also injurious to our commonwealth. And inasmuch as in union there is strength, we associate ourselves in the following League, to promote a social and moral reform in

ARTICLE 1. Our apparel shall be plain in style, without expensiveness or gaudy show in trimming, avoiding waste and display.

ART. 2. We will clothe our feet and limbs in such materials and styles as will conduce to health and comfort.

ART. 3. We will wear our hair as God hath given it to us, without adding substitutes, unless we need a wig.

ART. 4. We will not wear artificial flowers, or any substitute therefor, nor will we put on needless jewelry.

ART. 5. We will not use or traffic in intoxicating liquors, as a beverage, nor will we use tobacco in any form, except as a medicine.

ART. 6. We will not use paint, or needless perfumes for our persons.

ART. 7. We will not swear profanely, or take the name of the Lord in vain.

ART. 8. If we have children, we will endeavor to clothe and feed them so as to promote comfort and health, avoiding the cruel fashions that endanger their lives.

ART. 9. We will endeavor to make our expenditures in food and household furniture within our income, and with reference to furniture and other articles, we will not be swayed by the tendency of which is to demoralize, nor engage in games of chance, to the waste of time and money.

This is a platform broad enough for a world to stand upon; but, alas! that world is so given to humbug and show, that the missionary will surely labor without reward. All he will secure to follow him will be a laughable array of human angularities, male and female, whom a coroner's jury would run away from. Just think of pretty girls and women of society under this "New Dispensation!" We shudder over the contemplation. No false hair, no ribbons or laces, no perfumes, no jewelry—why, they would be fossils. We don't go in for the League.

SUGAR-COATED PILLS.

ALLOW me to say, in the first place, that I have no desire to puff up pill-vendors. I merely wish to show you how we often sugar-coat what would otherwise be bitter and disagreeable pills, and as editors rank very highly in my estimation, I'll speak a word for them first. If they can not accept our manuscript, they tell us that it is not suited for their paper—that they are overstocked with matter, or that they do not feel like purchasing any thing, as their regular contributors furnish them with all the matter they desire. Were they to tell us the truth—that they see no merit in our productions—we should hardly have the courage to present our wares at any other place, or have any ambition to do better in the future; so you see the pill of rejection is not so bitter to swallow if it is sugar-coated with a few words of regret at the non-acceptance of a manuscript.

The doctors tell us we are not so very ill as we imagine, and if we will only try to get well, we will try to help us along. Now, isn't this better than having a person with a death's-head countenance whining in our ears that death is the lot of all, and he hopes we shall be happier in the other world than we have ever been in this? He gives us a bitter pill, but forgets to put on its coat of sugar.

Then what a habit they have nowadays if rich people steal any thing! Of course they are not thieves; it would not be polite, and might be offensive to their ears, so they have a sugar-coated pill presented to them, and are pitied for being victims of kleptomania.

Persons in society rarely kill any one from evil intentions; they are "insane," and not accountable for their own actions. They are insane enough to commit murder, yet not insane enough to be put in a lunatic asylum. What a nice thing a coating of sugar is, now, isn't it?

Then we have the shoemaker gloss over the uncouth size of our feet, and if we drink No. — but I won't say how high a number fits us—is enormously large, he says he has known many ladies to wear sizes three times as large! Whether he tells the actual truth or not, of course we have no means of ascertaining, but he's an adept in the art of laying the coat of sugar thick over the pill of a big foot.

Then there's the baby! It may be as homely as an imp, and as noisy as two Tom-cats, but we don't tell its parents so; we pronounce it to be the sweetest and most quiet little darling we have ever had the good luck to meet. And we say that very ugly nose—figuratively and not literally speaking—into a more perfect shape. Ah me! the sugar seems to last a great while, but you must remember that the pills are inexhaustible, and they must be coated to "go down" some throats.

If the children make a racking noise, to set our poor heads to aching, when we are on a visit to the country, we strive to gulp down our uneasiness, and remark that children must not be expected to give up their enjoyments just on our account. It may be fibbing; but what of that? We would be most absurd to expect sacrifices simply to please us and because we are "company." Children are not so well versed in etiquette as older heads, and I don't blame them one whit, either, for going in for their rights.

I am rather afraid the Clergy sugar-coat their pills, when they are talking to their congregations; they do not speak out plainly what faults they notice among us—do not point out the sins we are guilty of. They ramble too much among the flowery paths of literature and conceal all the thorns—they desire to be popular, and dare not "speak out in meeting."

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

The World's Peace Convention.

THIS Convention, of which I am the honorable president, met yesterday in this city, and was composed of men from all parts of the world. Its object is to make universal peace everywhere.

All the members, when they were mere children, were noted for eternally crying for peace—of bread and butter—and at the opening of the Convention each one was elected a Justice of the Peace. They were mostly men who had seen the evils of war and private feuds, and earnestly desired to do their utmost to prevent them.

I have seen a great deal of war myself and suffered much: have I not been cruelly put in the guard-house three times a week? Have I not suffered all the evils of courts-martial and been deprived, cruelly, too, of sleeping on spring-beds? Have I not been nearly scared to death, time and again? At the beginning of a battle have I not been cruelly prevented from going home, when I was so anxious to go? Have I not run myself nearly to death to carry the news back that a fight had commenced? Oh, ruthless war, I hate thee!

Absalom Brown had suffered all the sanguinary horrors of the draft, and he was in for peace.

Peter Brown had suffered in the wars of his country to the extent of three honorable bullets in his back; and he was willing, nay anxious, to prosecute a most vigorous peace all over the world, irrespective of color.

Sam Wicks had suffered all the conveniences of a hospital while the battle of Fair Oaks was going on—being compelled to lie there when he wasn't sick; his cry was for peace at all hazards.

Dick Blivins had a camel's hump built on his head, just because he had, in a dispute, told a man in the politest way he knew of that he lied: he was for universal peace, at any price.

An English member had been severely kicked, just because he told a dun, who had called on him thirty-nine times, to call the next day, and that would make forty; he was in for universal amity.

Indeed, all the members had suffered in the discussions of mankind, more or less, and it was the most peaceful crowd that ever was gathered together.

The following resolutions were adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That in case of a battle, it is the duty of the nearest member of this society to hasten with all speed to the field of carnage, get in between the contending armies and wave his handkerchief—providing he has one—and read the riot act; if that does not prevent the progress of the battle, let him wedge bricks into the muzzles of all the cannon to prevent them from being discharged, draw all the loads out of the mortars with a cork-screw, catch the shells and tie a string around them, to keep them from bursting, and take the locks off of all the muskets. If they still persist in fighting, take all the ammunition from the soldiers and the every one of them to a tree; then you will have them secure, and, of course, the blood-shedding will stop.

Resolved, That if battles after this must be fought, no bayonets shall be used: the cannon shall be loaded with nothing but yam-balls, and muskets with mud balls, while the mortars throw nothing but hollow pumpkin-shells. No swords must be used but wooden ones, and the contending forces must keep their respectful distances. It is the opinion of this learned and peaceful body that if this resolution is followed out to the letter, great battles can be fought without the narrowing feature of blood being shed.

Resolved, That it is the duty of the members of this society when they see a street fight in progress, to resolutely pull off their coats and ask some of the bystanders to go in determinedly and stop the mugs.

Resolved, That if any nation feels herself snubbed by another, and must go to war, that it send none but members of this society, for the world can rest assured that they won't fight.

Resolved, That if any of the members of this society are hit on the nose, or kicked, they will pocket the affront, or the arrow, and say nothing about it—or, at least, run home, where they can have an opportunity of thinking twice upon it, before acting rashly.

Resolved, That as liquor is the main cause of brawls, it is our duty to destroy as much of it as we can; each member is expected to destroy it as he deems proper. This is the worst thing out, and it must be taken in.

Resolved, That, as many midnight murders are committed merely for money, it is our duty to remove the cause.

Resolved, That if any member is assaulted, he will give a lesson to the world by running off, as he has been in the habit of doing.

Resolved, That universal peace must be carried into households. No man will hereafter be allowed to marry a wife who has a mother, or has ever had one. No wife will be permitted to wage war upon a defenseless husband, no matter how big he is, nor compel him to sleep out in the woodshed.

If the peace on earth is disturbed after this, it won't be our fault.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

MR. ALBERT W. AIKEN'S NEW SERIAL,

A STRANGE GIRL.

is a story of the Homes and Mills of New England. It shows the author in quite a new view, and is of the deepest interest both as to persons and plot. Mr. Aiken is a very close observer of human nature, and that he reads woman as well as man is fully evident from this admirable production.

Woman's World.

The Treadle about Employment for Women.—Home for the Woman's World.—Gentlemen's Fashions.—Lingerie.—Dressing-gowns and Smoking-jackets.—Hosiery.—Body-bells and Chest-protectors.

THERE is nothing which I so much deprecate as the incessant twaddle, I can call it by no other name, kept up by some journals and in certain cliques, on the subject of "employment for women." According to these self-elected champions for the sex, nothing is to be done for women but to educate and train them for business, professions and trades, like men, and they can "take care of themselves."

Now, this I positively deny. Because some, or even many women, do support and take care of themselves, well and in comfort, while not a few acquire competencies and fortunes, that can never prove that women were intended by God and nature to be bread-winners, and competitors with men in the life-battle for fortune and honors. It is a cruel necessity of this age of progress and modern civilization, that so many women are deprived of the shelter of the HOME, that true and only WOMAN'S WORLD. It is a cruel mistake—to call it by the mildest name—to argue that the remedy for the necessity can be found in training women to trades and professions in the same way we do men. Such education can, at best, but ameliorate the conditions in the case. Something more is needed, but I frankly confess I can not say what that something is, since we can not marry all our women to men who could provide them homes, where they might be, what nature intended them for, helpmates for the ruder sex—not competitors with them.

If our girls could be educated in the happy art of rendering a small home attractive, and our boys be brought up to be less aspiring for fortune, and more content with comfort devoid of display, we might hope for better things. We need reform in the home circle and the school-room. We must sow the seeds of a wholesome humility in our boys as well as our girls, if we really desire to see this thing remedied, or rather ameliorated; for I confess I do not see any complete and satisfactory solution of our modern difficulty, known as the "Woman Question."

It is in this spirit I try to write for the

Woman's World, hoping to reach "our boys" through their mothers and sisters, inculcating chivalrous devotion to all womanhood through the medium of the love they shall feel for those self-sacrificing mothers and sisters.

The art of living well on small means should be cultivated, not so much for the immediate benefit of saving for accumulation, as for the example given our children. Teach a child by example a lesson of self-abnegation, a principle of humanity, and it will be of lasting benefit. But be sure while performing that act of self-sacrifice to exercise the rights of a parent in making your child do likewise. Do not provide a sewing-machine for your daughter, and neglect the purchase of a tool-chest for your son. While she is taught to bake and brew, and knit and darn, teach him to hear and delve, and carve and mold, and bear the heavier burdens.

This is the way to teach true equality of the sexes. Above all, teach them the beautiful lesson of fraternal love, and in the coming years, if there is a necessity for the sister as well as the brother to enter the field of the world's great workshop, leaving the homestead behind them, he will not forget that she is the weaker vessel, and he will be not only her true knight and strong brother, but for her sake will take up his lance for all womanhood, while she will remember he could not perform some of the tasks easy for her defter fingers and quicker fancy, and though thousands of miles may separate them, for his sake she will remember that all men are her brothers who need her gentle help and nimble ministrations. She will not be strong-headed; she will be truly strong-minded—strong in the strength made perfect through her weakness—strong-hearted. Now, I am not so dead in trespasses and sins of vanity, as to suppose I have solved the woman question, or that I have done any thing more than reiterate an old lesson—but it is one that can not be repeated too often. I am no opponent of woman's political and social enfranchisement, but I do oppose those shallow babblers who imagine they can remedy "woman's weakness, woman's pain," by putting a ballot in her hands. Can they *unmake* her very nature? Can they change her variable physical condition, requiring support, shelter and seclusion through so much of her time? Can they give her a man's strong muscles and determined will, and strong brain? Would she be a woman if all this were effected? Is our boasted civilization and progress to bring about this result? Forbid it, Heaven! We do not wish a nation of Amazons.

WHAT TO WEAR.

As we are in the midst of the *démolition*, it is not possible to mention the new styles of coats, pantaloons and vests this week; but, having been favored with an inner view of a large fashionable furnishing house, we are prepared to give our readers a few hints on gentlemen's *lingerie* and a few other matters which may not be uninteresting.

French yoke-shirts are almost universally worn. Nearly all the new garments are cut in this style, with the collar buttoning in the back, not in front. This arrangement keeps the bosom unwrinkled; but, as a great number of gentlemen prefer the old fashion of buttoning in front, their wishes have not been forgotten.

The most fashionable bosoms have no pleats, but are made simply of doubled linen, with an inner lining of muslin, making three thicknesses. Rows of stitching, and sometimes several small cords stitched lengthwise in these bosoms, are the most approved style of ornament. These plain bosoms are so easily ironed they are always hailed with delight by laundresses. When pleats are introduced, they are broad and but few in number. A loop of linen tape is attached to the bottom of the bosom, which fastens it down to the button of the waistband of the drawers.

Collars and cuffs are invariably made separate, two sets for each shirt. The favorite styles are the "Yacht club" and the "London club." The first is a large, turned-down collar, the second a standing band, with the front corners cut off.

Dressing-gowns, intended for bedroom wear, are invariably long. They may be made of inexpensive materials, such as printed stuffs, Tycoon reps and Empress cloths. Some very elegant ones are shown of fine blue, green and crimson cashmere lined with a rich quilted lining of satin of a contrasting or complementary shade. For instance, a dark maroon cashmere gown lined with scarlet or coral-colored satin. Dark blue with sky blue, or plum-colored with mauve or lavender.

Smoking-jackets are short, and are made of the same materials and colors, but the handsomest are those of velvet of dark plum-color, or dark brown, lined with scarlet, coral, blue, or purple, according to fancy. Cut pattern patterns of all these things can be furnished to those who prefer making them at home.

Striped hosiery is more fashionable than ever. The stripes are either horizontal or lengthwise.

Chest-protectors of fine buck-skin, covered with bright scarlet broadcloth, are shown for those who are much exposed to the weather, or suffer from pulmonary or bronchial weakness. Sometimes a spine-protector is added to the chest-protector, fastening by straps on the shoulders, and confined by a belt around the waist. Body-bells or protectors, of the same materials, are also seen. They should be used by all who suffer from rheumatism in the hips or lumbar regions, and particularly if their occupations expose them to variations of heat and cold.

EMILY VERDERY.

FRIENDS TO THE FRONT!

One Hundred Thousand More!

EVERY person who has read "Nick Whiffles," "The Wolf Demon," "Nick of the Woods," "The Scalp Hunters," etc., will find in

DEATH-NOTCH, THE DESTROYER,

one of the most original Indian stories written in many years.

Cooper and Robinson, in their time, were what Old Coomes is to-day in the field of Western Life and Romance.

Having lived all his life on the frontier, and been familiar with many of the noted characters of Prairies, Plains, and Wilderness, his works are life and truth itself. Hence their great popularity. Let our friends see to it that their friends enjoy with them the coming Feast of Good Things.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future use.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only when stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS.; as "copy," "style," "length." Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet.—Use Commencement Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving its title and page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of notice.—All experienced and popular writers will find an ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We will find place for "Jim Bagley's Ghost," "An Unlooked-for Friend," "The Harpener's Prophecy," "Questions to Willie," "Hunting the Gantlet," "A South-Sea-Island Welcome," "Bill Arden's Vengeance," "The Infatuated Captain," "Scaling a Bald Head," "Faith in Love," "Darlings," "Woman's Eyes," "Only a Currier-Boy," "Very good," "Kissing on the Sky," (not available.)

These contributions we must, for various reasons, decline. Only such are returned as contain stamps, at full letter rates, for such return: "Modern Chivalry," "Saved by Lightning," "Life's Bitter Lesson," "The Dishonored," "Job-boom Bluff," "Clara's Mistake," "An Advertiser's Complaint," "The River," "An Out-West Romance," "The Driver's Story," "A Land-Slide," "A Winter Rose," "John Anderson's Boy," "The Peace Offering," "Don't Mention It."

A. G. We are not in want of anything, prose or poetry, but are always glad to receive what is good of either.

The sketches and poem by Mrs. E. E. A. we return. Six cents short on postage to us. Authors should be careful and fully prepay.

CYTHERIA. The poem is full of good feeling, but is imperfectly expressed. We give it one revision and use it.

QUILL. QUILLERBROOK'S little essay is good enough for use, but we can not find place for it.

ZENAS B. If a MS. comes to us underpaid in postage, we usually refuse to receive it. It is taken from the post, to preserve it from total loss, we hold it liable for the deficient postage.

JAS. R. W. We can not use the sketch. It is not "just the thing," as a composition; while in subject it deals with a subject which we do not care to introduce to our readers. We know some of the weeklies do use such stories, but we prefer to avoid them.

Impassioned tenderness characterizes the poem "Darlings," by Frank M. Imbrie. In the accepted list, "Woman's Eyes," by L. C. Greenwood, is very beautifully expressed. "Faith in Love," by James Hangerford, is a fine, strong poem, of which any of our poets might be proud. We are glad to recognize such excellence as these three contributors bestow.

The author of "An Advertisement" is informed that in all cases we require the author's full and correct name. A *nom de plume* may be used on the contribution, but to the editor the name and full address must be given.

A. P. M. Poems sometimes must wait months for their appearance. We can not, at any time, indicate when a particular contribution will appear in prose or verse, will appear. But, once on the accepted list, the "turn" will come, sooner or later.

W. K. We can not "do you the favor" to send your MS. to other publishers than we will take our messenger two hours of time and necessitate paying car fares to comply with your request.

K. K. K. We certainly have answered your query a dozen times in this column, and you know it.

JERRY B. By the last census, Cincinnati was proven to be the eighth city in the Union, in point of population, having 216,339 inhabitants; Chicago stands fifth in order, with 285,425; New Orleans, ninth; San Francisco, tenth.

MECHANIC. Tobacco is pleasantly scented by wetting the leaves in any of a half-dozen decoctions of honey, rose-leaves, sage, etc. To polish furniture well, just saturate the surface with olive oil; then apply a solution of gum-arabic in boiling alcohol. There are several other good recipes, and some preparations sold by druggists, which are excellent.

W. G. Go to some good physician.

CASPER H. An office-seeker is not a most desirable profession. Indeed, the office-seeker is a most unhappy man, a badgered man, a hunted man, every turn; and, even if he gets office, is liable at any moment to be turned aside. Take our advice, and let "office" alone. Go to some honest, steady employ.

EFFICIENT. We can not tell you where to apply for service. Your talent is doubtless good enough to warrant some one giving you a good place in the counting-room desk, but so is the talent of one thousand others, and you must compete for the places that are open to competition. That is all.

STUDIOUS. Prof. Wilcox made an estimate regarding the number of hairs on a man's head, upon a person's head, to the square inch, viz.: 744 hairs; and there are 120 superficial inches to the surface of the head, which would make 89,280 hairs upon the head. It is said that if a man lives to the age of fifty years, his hair, if not cut at all, would grow to the length of thirteen feet, while his beard, in twenty-five years, would reach a length of one foot. Persons with coarse hair do not become bald so readily as those who have fine hair, and men are far more liable to baldness than women; the reason being that the latter do not keep their heads so constantly covered up. On this account the Indian races retain their hair intact through their lifetime.

WALKER. Implied is not from the Hebrew, as you suppose, but a name in Mohammedan mythology, given to the angel who, it is believed, will sound the trumpet at the Day of Judgment.

BEILA. You are right in your idea that words in the Spanish language are compounded with *l* and *ll* pronounced as if spelled with *W*. For instance, Don Juan is pronounced Don Wan; Juanita is pronounced as if spelled Wanjita; and Juanes, the name of the late President of Mexico, as Warroes.

STATESMAN. Pennsylvania is called the "Keystone State," from having been the central State in the Union when the Constitution was formed.

SCHOOLBOY. It was not the Emperor Napoleon who bore the name of Napoleon Bonaparte, but Louis Philippe of France, who had the cognomen bestowed upon him on account of the great prosperity of his kingdom under his reign; and it is said he liked the name as his great predecessor was proud of the association of his name with war and conquest.

HANLON. General John C. Fremont won the name "Pathfinder of the Rocky Mountains" on account of the successful exploring expeditions he made in that region.

MARCUS. The name of "Yellow Jack" is applied by seamen to the yellow fever, and so called from the fact that vessels on giving out a quarantine board were wont to hoist a yellow flag, or "jack," to warn others from them.

WALLACE WRIGHT. When an invitation to dinner or to a party is written, it should be in the name of the heads of the house, and in the third person, as follows:
Mr. and Mrs. — request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. —'s company at dinner, on Monday, Jan. —, at 6 o'clock.
The answer should be, if accepting:
Mr. and Mrs. — have much pleasure in accepting the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. —, for Jan. —, at 6 o'clock. And, if refusing:
Mr. and Mrs. — regret that a previous engagement will prevent them from accepting the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. —, for Jan. —.
The above are the stereotyped methods of invitations and refusals, but many delicate and pleasant between bonds of intimate friendship exist, can dispense with set rules, and write to suit themselves.

SOLDIER. New weapons have been introduced into cavalry regiments in giving out a Quartermaster of the first rank, lances, similar to those used in Russia, will be borne, and Officers will also carry the same weapon.
The Cavalry will be armed also with rifles, that they may act on foot as infantry, when it is necessary to do so.

POET. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" contains 561 words, of which 381 are derived from the Anglo-Saxon, 225 from the Latin, 165 from the French, 7 from the Italian, and 23 from the Greek. The rule has been established in composition that more Saxon words used the stronger and tamer the expression.

STRENGTHVILLE.—The English language must be classed with the Romance or neo-Latin dialects, along with the French, Italian, and Spanish, for it is demonstrated that there are 30,000 words in the English that can be traced to a Latin source, against 13,300 Teutonic words.

NURSE. You will always find geranium leaves an excellent application for cuts of any kind. Bruise the leaves and apply to the part injured, and soon it will be cicatrized.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

WHERE TO REMEMBER.

BY MATTIE D. BRITTS.

You say you'll love me ever,
You swear you won't forget;
On days we've passed together
You'll think with fond regret.
And I would half believe you
If it were not quite so true
That human loves are fleeting
As morning's early dew.

But there's one place where friendship
Can know no chilling change,
Where coldness never enters,
And trifles ne'er estrange.
Where hearts are pure and constant,
And feel no blighting care;
So love me up in Heaven!—
You'll ne'er forget me there.

Madame Durand's Protesges,

OR,

THE FATEFUL LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "CECIL'S DE-
CEIT," "ADRIA THE ADOPTEE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

MADAME'S WARNING.

THEY gathered, an awe-stricken group, about the great arm-chair and its silent occupant.

Fay, groveling on the floor in an excess of terror, shrieked and tore her fair hair unheeded, until Lucian Ware, with a face that, in its distorted, pallid intensity, was like the face of some unholy spirit, beautiful still, but baleful in its stamp of baffled rage, lifted her in his arms and placed her on a couch.

Then Erne put his hand on the great chair, wheeling it about to face the light. The slight, erect figure in its rich brocade, with jeweled hands clasped loosely in the lap, was rigid and motionless as death itself. The lips were blue, and drawn apart, the soft, rich texture of the shriveled skin changed to a deathlike hue, but the eyes were wide of glittering light.

Even in that awful hour Madame Durand's glance never softened to implore those about her. The expression of the gleaming black orbs was one of impatience and command—bitter, hard, unwavering, as in all the undeviating course she had traversed.

It would seem that no afflicting power could bend or break the madame's indomitable spirit.

"Oh, not dead!" cried the lawyer, in tense, sharp tones. "Thank Heaven! not dead!"

A sigh of ineffable relief broke over Mirabel's lips. She dropped her soft palms on the wrinkled brow, clammy as with the dew of death. Then she began to unloose the priceless lace at madame's throat, but a flash of those gleaming eyes arrested her movement.

The pale lips quivered slightly, but no articulate sound passed them. Mirabel interpreted the unuttered word with intuitive quickness.

"Ross?—I will find her for you. Mr. Thancroft, for Heaven's sake, do something quickly."

She sped away with almost incredible swiftness, and Mr. Thancroft turned his face toward Erne, with big, cold drops, wrung by intense emotion, standing on his brow.

"It is a paralytic stroke," he said, "and not the first. Send some one for Doctor Gaines, in all haste."

"I will go myself," returned Erne, hurriedly quitting the apartment.

After the first confusion of the shock, every thing was done with system and dispatch.

Lucian Ware came forward with quiet address, and lifting the palsied figure, tenderly bore madame to her own chamber. Ross came and waited on her helpless mistress, who was rallying already from the first severity of the stroke, and all waited with painful anxiety the coming of the physician.

Mirabel, meantime, busied herself in attempting to relieve the distress of Fay St. Orme. But the latter screamed and sobbed and shuddered under the appliance of ice to her temples, the laving of her brow with perfumed water, and chafing of the hands and wrists, which Mirabel adopted. The housekeeper prescribed soothing drops, but Fay clenched her little white teeth and refused to swallow them.

"Will you stop that intolerable noise?" cried the lawyer, pausing in his nervous strides back and forth across the apartment.

"It may be life or death to Madame Durand that all excitement be kept from her."

"She is quite wild with fright," explained Mirabel. "When she understands that madame is not really dead, she will grow quieter, I think."

"Fuss and fol-de-rol!" ejaculated Mr. Thancroft. "She is sensible as you or I; I'm sure she has no more cause for fright. Here, bring me a pail of water, some one; and I'll bring her to her senses."

Without waiting an answer to his order, he rushed away, and in two minutes' time was heard returning.

Fay's convulsive starts grew less apparent; she no longer screamed, but moaned faintly as she lay upon the cushions.

"Oh, oh, oh!" she breathed faintly and shudderingly as the lawyer drew near.

He raised the water-pitcher he carried, threateningly, above her, as her eyelids trembled and slightly unclosed.

"See here, young lady," he said, grimly, "you'll oblige all concerned by keeping perfectly quiet. I've seen people have hysteria before to-day, and know something about their management. Nothing so good as pure, cold water; so if you scream or struggle again, you'll receive the benefit of two quarts or more, and I'm afraid it might ruin your dress. That will do, Miss Durand; I'll keep watch for a time."

"Oh!" screamed Miss St. Orme, faintly, with symptoms of relapsing into another paroxysm; but a few drops of the ice-cold water slipped into her face, quieted her again.

Had not Mirabel been possessed of grave fears for Madame Durand, she would have smiled at the ludicrousness of the scene—the lawyer, grim and threatening, holding his pitcher aloft, Fay furtively watching him and endeavoring to suppress her shuddering sighs, for she had really worked herself into a state of high nervous excitement which even the selfishness that formed the chief element in her character could scarcely command.

The measure was harsh but salutary, and Miss St. Orme was soon recovered sufficiently to retire to her own apartment, where

one of the housemaids was deputed to attend her.

In half an hour's time Erne clattered back to the door, accompanied by Doctor Gaines, who devoted all his skill to the relief of Madame Durand, with partial success.

The generous stimulus he supplied brought an appearance of life back into the numbed, stricken body. The power of speech came with it, though the utterance was labored and slow.

Madame was in no further immediate danger, the physician said; she might recover the use of her limbs—he thought it most probable, she possessed so much of strong animal life; but for the time she must exercise patience and remain wholly unexcited.

Patience, in the manner of his meaning, was something new to the experience of Madame Durand. She had put an iron curb upon her affections, and literally ground out the tender sympathies which belong to the unperverted feminine nature, but she had never put check to her fancied desires nor controlled her impulses. She had covered by the garb of eccentricity the intense restlessness of a life barren of the satisfactory results which might have turned it into a smooth, pleasant, useful channel.

How much of the great, sorrowful mistake could be properly visited upon herself, how much ascribed to the force of early training, an intensity of natural passions, and the course of attendant events, it were a bootless effort to attempt determining.

But to this pass had madame come, and for this night at least she was willing to swallow the opiate which the physician prepared, and with Ross watching by her side, drift through an obscurity of painful apathy which was neither consciousness of her own strait nor the tense influence of unbased visions. It may have been an undefined regret for the distorted past, it may have been a dim prescience of time and events to come.

When Doctor Gaines left the madame's room and was let out into the court, dark except for the light of the dying moon, and the star gleams, he was scarcely surprised to find the impulsive little old lawyer waiting him there.

"Have you a vacant place in your gig, doctor?" asked the latter, familiarly. "I know you'd be willing to go out of your way any day or night to accommodate me."

"If you don't object to crowding and don't attempt to interview me," returned the other, linking arms with his old friend as they walked down through the grounds to the avenue gates.

But the last is just what I propose doing."

"Waylaid me for the purpose, eh?"

"Exactly. At least I started my clerk ahead with that view. I want the truth of the madame's case."

"Well, didn't you hear it?"

"I heard your report at the house."

"What more do you want, my friend?"

"I want a plain statement, I say. See here, Gaines, haven't you enough confidence in my discretion to break through professional reserve this once? I've got reason, enough for pressing you, be assured."

"Well, then, I gave them truth straight enough up there, but not all of it. Madame's chance for ultimate recovery isn't one out of a thousand. She'll be better, she'll improve very rapidly, until some passion or excitement brings on the final fatal attack. So long as she's kept calm and quiet, she is tolerably safe; but you know she's no more to be ruled than the elements are."

"The lawyer groaned audibly."

"There, don't be so disheartened," said the doctor, encouragingly. "You'll find lost pickings neatly summed up in a bequest without doubt; for my part, I don't owe much to the prime old gentleman. Her superior digestion left little room for the exercise of my profession, you see."

It was less lack of all feeling on the doctor's part which prompted his remark than a desire to divert his friend from the saddest aspect such a case must present.

"I wish I was sure of others faring as well as I shall, which means only that I'll get my just dues—neither more nor less."

"Here's the trouble, Gaines. Madame can't be induced to make her will or to discover Jules' son to his own rights."

"If she dies without revealing his personality, he may never know his true name or station, and Lord only knows to what winds the Durand estates will be scattered."

"The madame should be apprised of her own danger, doctor, believe me."

"The knowledge of it would send her into the very passion we wish to avoid."

"No; madame is too sensible when rightly approached. She must see the necessity for quiet action, and yield to it."

"Nevertheless, I'll not take the risk," declared the doctor; and Mr. Thancroft, in a perturbation of spirit, pondered the living night without deciding the exact letter of his duty.

Neither did all sleep at the manse that night; but to trace out the thread, we must go back for an hour or two.

The maid who waited upon Fay St. Orme had none of the discreet silence which pertained to Milly Ross. She was the housekeeper's niece, and all her life passed here gave her a knowledge of the Durand history without putting the seal of silent caution upon her lips.

"It's awful, to be sure," said the gossiping maid, "but folks always said the madame were a-tempting of retribution onto her. It's not for me to say, and she's been kind enough to us'n, aside from putting that mealy-faced Ross over us all, but the madame has flew in the face of Providence from first to last. Those as go back on their own flesh and blood isn't like to have many to mourn 'em when it comes to such a visitation."

"I've heard the story," said Fay, who was not averse to gleaming knowledge by even this reprehensible method. "Don't you suppose that madame will send for the little boy, her grandson, now that she is so ill?"

"Lor', he's a grown man afore this time," replied the girl. Fay had assumed this ignorance simply for the sake of drawing her out, without direct questioning. "He's older than I by full two years. My aunt was here then, and she's told me many a time how the poor young thing looked—fair, famished as she was—and the baby in her arms, that was just its father's born image, but the madame was never moved no way at all."

"Aunt says that she believes to this day that madame seen an ill-omen that night."

She went into her room, and found her white and shivering as a ghost, but the madame pretended it was only because her necklace was lost. That was enough to bring bad luck, she said.

"Madame believes in omens?" Fay inquired, carelessly.

"She's reason to," returned the girl, solemnly. "She's brought enough sorrow onto herself by disregarding 'em. You saw the picture in the parlor, Miss?"

Fay nodded.

"Well, it's counted a tempting of Providence to follow after the track of that one in any way whatsoever. But no sooner was our madame married and settled down, than she goes and orders a dress precisely like the one Madame Rosalie is pointed in. She had it made all in secret they say, and dressed in it till she looked like the very picture stepped from its frame. She meant to surprise her husband, she said, when he'd come home from the hunting where he'd gone that day."

"And, Miss, he was brought home stark dead."

"Ugh!" shuddered Fay.

"Madame took off the dress and the other things, and put them away with her own hands in the very bottom of a great cedar-wood chest, where they've laid ever since, never seeing the light of day, except once a year, when she takes 'em out to brush and air."

"Have you seen them?" asked Fay, with awakened interest.

"I wouldn't durst let the madame know," said the girl, with a frightened look. "You see, since aunt has got rheumatic I keep the lumber-room key, and do the dusting and sorting there. I just took a peep into that chest one day, and the gown and all are there, kept fresher'n you'd think from being always in the dark. I'll let you see it some day if you like, Miss."

The maid slept on an impromptu couch in Fay's room that night. The young lady declared herself too nervous and unstrung to be left quite alone, and made this suggestion when Mirabel offered to share her apartment.

The housekeeper's niece slept soundly, never suspecting the train of consequences her gossip had set into motion.

It was the dark hour before the dawn, and Milly Ross drowsed in her watch by madame's bedside.

A faint rustle in the room did not arouse her, but madame, with wide-open, gazing eyes, saw a figure float past her perspective view. A figure wearing the dress of azure silk, the mass of golden hair looped high by the old-style comb, and the cold, proud face of Madame Rosalie Durand as pictured on the canvas hanging below.

Milly Ross woke suddenly to meet the intense gaze of her mistress.

"I have been warned, Ross," said madame, with slow, calm utterance. "I have seen Rosalie Durand."

Milly shuddered, knowing that other Durand superstition which the apparition foretold—that the person seeing it should meet death as did fair, false Rosalie—by poison!

CHAPTER VIII.

A FORTUNE REJECTED.

ELEVEN next day saw Mr. Thancroft toiling up Fay's rocky footpath, which led to the manse.

The true-hearted little lawyer had taken his resolution at last, and was on his way to face madame, gently as might be, with the hopelessness of her case, and, in his unwavering fidelity, beseech her once more to relent toward the outcast scion of the house.

"I wouldn't shake her hold on life by so much as a breath," he muttered, as he stamped excitedly on up the rocky pathway. "I wouldn't even for the sake of Jules Durand's boy, but her span of years is so near the end, and his is all before him."

"Not one chance in a thousand, Gaines said, but if it were the nine hundred and ninety-nine she had, madame would throw them all away before she'd bend that haughty spirit."

"There must be some way to reach her—some way to soften her—if I could but find it. She has no feeling on any subject except the subject of death, and she dreads that, but has always shrunk from it as a horror that stands aloof in the far future."

"Heaven grant the knowledge that it threatens her so closely may awaken the better promptings which she must experience, or stain the blank of her eternal future by letting a deliberate wrong go unrighted."

"Ah, madame, it's not so foul a neglect while you're here to rule your own, as it will be if strangers succeed you, and your son's boy be lost to all the noble chances of life as to his ancestral rights."

"Ah, madame, madame! I alone of them all know how you have walked over thorns without flinching. I have seen the agony when it rose up too intolerable for calmly bearing, and you rode over it in one of the tempestuous passions that people called demoniacal, and feared you for possessing. But you never admitted the truth to even yourself, and I can't hope that you'll do it now."

With sorrowful face bent toward the ground, he pursued the remainder of his way, dejectedly musing.

The staid old man-servant answered his muffled rap, and ushered him into the silent room, where madame had been wont to receive him.

Her great chair, with the cloth of purple and gold draping it like a vacant throne, and the richly-wrought, time-dimmed footstool, were in their accustomed places; but the queer, erect little figure would never sit there in state, and announce her whimsical mandates to this faithful servitor of hers—never again.

With a deep sigh, the little lawyer turned his back upon the familiar appointments of the room, and stared through the open window into the little court where every tree and plant breathed an odorless message of madame's care of it.

"How bright the sunshine is," he murmured, passing his hand across his dimming eyes impatiently. "What a mocking world it is to look so serene, yet to lay so many pitfalls for our steps through it, and to watch us fade like late blossoms without a passing cloud of pity."

"Ah, nonsense! What has come over me that I should be thinking such sentimental school-girl twaddle. Indigestion, madame would say, if she could know it."

The softly opening door put a stop to his reverie. Mirabel came in with the subdued air which pervaded all the place.

"Madame will see you at once in her own chamber," said Mirabel.

"How is she?" asked the lawyer, linger-

ing. Of the two young dependent relatives of the madame, Mr. Thancroft was impressed much in favor of Miss Durand, as he was impatient and distrustful of Fay St. Orme.

"Wonderfully improved, Ross reports," Mirabel replied. "I have not seen her since midnight."

She did not consider it necessary to add that this was owing wholly to the madame's caprice. Mirabel had volunteered to share Ross' watch through the night, but had been unequivocally refused; again, this morning she had rapped early at madame's door and proffered her services, but with the same result.

Madame Durand had not succumbed to the helplessness which had fallen upon her. The lawyer found her with her silver hair smoothly dressed, beneath the tiny cap of delicate lace which she always wore; a loose silk dressing-robe was drawn about her shoulders, and she was propped to a reclining posture in the great canopied bed which had been wheeled close to the open windows.

Her hands lay upon the light coverlet, and a little of the lost power had come back to the right.

She could move it painfully, and the fingers were growing more flexible with each passing hour.

Ross had been chafing the deadened limbs with powerful liniment, but now, at a glance from her mistress, she withdrew to the opposite side of the large apartment.

"Welcome," said madame, turning her keen bright eyes upon the lawyer. "I expected you, or I should have sent."

"You wanted me?" asked he, brightening. "How do you find yourself this morning, dear Madame Durand?"

"Bah! fiddlesticks! better, you see," madame replied. She spoke clearly, and in her old, abrupt, vehement manner, but her utterance was painfully slow. "My appetite is good—good. I had an omelet and a pigeon's breast for breakfast, Mr. Thancroft, and dry toast and French coffee, and I relished them all. What do you think of that?"

"Good," said the lawyer, mechanically. There was a striking disparity between madame's labored speech and the commonplace burden of it. Her peering bird-glance read his expression of shocked surprise, and she chuckled audibly.

"Do you think because I'm afflicted I should make a martyr of myself also?" she asked. "No, no, Mr. Thancroft! With an appetite, a clear conscience, and a good digestion, I'll keep in cheerful tone to the end of my days."

Which I pray Heaven may be long yet," uttered the lawyer, solemnly.

"Prayer if you like, but I don't believe in prayers," asserted madame, with her old cynical emphasis, despite her slow utterance. "Prayer never kept the pot boiling without some hard work to aid it. Prayer will not lengthen out life when the extremity is reached; but ordinary care and no dyspepsia will make it worth the living while it lasts. I've passed three score and ten, my friend, and I'm very near to the end."

You look grave, though you'll not have much to regret, Mr. Thancroft. Will you please the tyrannical old task-mistress, think you?"

"Madame," cried the lawyer, in much distress, "you overwhelm me with grief when you speak so."

"There, I'll not be contradicted," interrupted the madame. "And you shall not agree with me either, for I'll not have any one cringe to please me because I'm near death."

"And I'll not cringe to you," declared Mr. Thancroft. "But, ah, madame! I will not be well to make your peace here as a preparation for the great hereafter?"

Madame was powerless to turn her head, but her right hand wavered slightly up, and her keen eyes flashed brilliantly upon him.

"Don't begin by angering me, Mr. Thancroft. Neither you nor any one else shall influence me from my own set course. Give me my own time, my own way, and I may take you into my confidence; but provoke me, and you'll only defeat your own wishes."

Madame lay back upon the pillow, panting from her vehemence. Her labored respiration, and the slight purplish flush which had risen to her face, brought the physician's warning in full force to the lawyer's mind.

He bowed his head, and remained silent, lest some hasty expression of his might tend to increase her agitation.

Madame's wide eyes gleamed upon him, searching his subdued, sorrowful countenance.

"Old friend," she resumed, more softly, "let us pass by all the quibbles we have been in the habit of striking against. Let the old troubles rest forever after this."

"I see that you wonder at my unconcern in the face of my dire dread of death. It's because I know it to be inevitable, and I'd scorn to shrink or struggle before my fate."

"Gaines may be mistaken," began the lawyer, in the natural desire which people seem always to possess to raise up hope where none exists.

"Has he given up my case?" queried madame, sharply.

"Oh, no! I thought he must have told you. He only realizes attendant danger."

"Tell me exactly."

"You must keep yourself very calm, madame. Any sudden passion or strong excitement might prove fatal."

Madame's suppressed chuckle was expressive of such ill-timed, ghastly mirth, that the lawyer started nervously, and stared at her in unconcealed wonderment.

"Oh, wonderful prescience," cried she, in bitter mockery. "Oh, cultivated foreknowledge! And when the task comes—because he predicted it—our obtuse Doctor Gaines will declare that I have died from natural causes."

"Listen to me, Mr. Thancroft. I shall come to my death by no fair means. My life shall be foully wrested away, for all that my span of years is so nearly run. Will you see that I do not go unavenged? You don't believe me now, but you will. I tell you that I shall die unfairly—a Durand death. I have been warned. I have seen the specter of Rosalie Durand."

The lawyer stared at her dumbly.

"I lay helpless in my bed with Ross by me, but she had fallen into a momentary doze. I could see through the windows that the stars were blotted out in the inky blackness just before day. I was wide awake as I am at this moment. Rosalie Durand, in her azure robe, her face fair in its winning loveliness, as it is painted, floated slowly across my sight. It was neither a vision nor an optical delusion."

It was a warning, my friend—a warning that I shall be betrayed to death as she was. Promise me that you will look for traces of poison when all is over."

"Ah, madame! whom could you suspect?" he asked, incredulous. "You are not apt to yield to superstition. You were certainly dreaming, madame."

"No, no!" said madame, slowly, impressively. "I do not suspect you, though you mean to leave me an unavenged victim."

"If you are not the victim of a mere delusion, you shall not go unavenged!" cried the lawyer, with emotion.

"Thanks, my friend," uttered madame. "I can trust you."

She relapsed into sudden silence, and Mr. Thancroft waited in grave anxiety for the revelation he thought she must make now, and the commissions he hoped she might put upon him.

Madame perceived his expectant look, and divined its origin.

"Don't wait," she said, imperatively. "That's all I want of you now, but I may give you work before long."

"Oh, madame, see that you do not defer it too long," urged he.

"Come to-morrow, then—to-morrow at this hour. Come prepared to draw up my will in due form. There, my friend; no comments, and no advice. Call Ross here, please."

Ross came, and the lawyer took his departure, not half-satisfied by that much concession from the madame, but not daring to urge his plea further from fear of arousing the wayward opposition which it was so useless to combat.

"I want to rest for an hour," said madame, to her maid. "Then bring me luncheon, and when it is over below, send Erne Valere and Miss Durand here together."

Ross smoothed the pillows and turned the screens before the windows, then withdrew quietly.

"Can it mean any thing—calling the two together?" asked Ross of herself. "Madame will be sure to send me away if it does, though she's so free at times. I must provide for the chance—I don't like to play such a part, but I must this once."

She passed, with a noiseless, gliding step, into the room adjoining madame's. It was simply an antechamber of exceedingly singular shape, being a corner cut off by the circular stairway, leaving the third side of what would otherwise have been a triangle a convex curve of wall, blank except for a door opening upon a staircase landing. Another door led into madame's chamber, and a swinging casement opened upon a long, narrow balcony which ran above the court.

The strange appearance of this antechamber was heightened by a paved floor of red and black. It was paneled with black walnut, and the one window was draped with dingy red damask, which lent a lurid glow to the light that fell through.

There were many dim nooks in the old manse, but none more suggestive of mystery than this one communicating with madame's apartment.

Milly Ross swung the casement wide, and dropped the curtain before the opened space.

The balcony was filled with greenery—tall flowering shrubs in stone vases of fantastic shapes, and great urns with vines trained from them over the windows. And the balcony was inaccessible except from these two rooms.

Madame slept a short, refreshing sleep, and awoke to partake of her luncheon with her usual zest.

Then Erne Valere and Mirabel Durand came up the spiral stairway and were admitted into madame's presence for the first time that day.

"Don't trouble yourselves about my state of health, young people," said madame, when Erne would have expressed his solicitude. "It's a waste of breath, and my breath is precious, if yours is not; besides, Ross can tell you all that. Where is Ross?"

Milly advanced to the bedside.

"You can go now, Ross. Miss Durand will ring when you're wanted again."

"Come nearer," said madame, when Ross had gone. "Here, Miss Durand, let me look you squarely in the face again."

Mirabel turned her face squarely to the light and patiently awaited madame's pleasure.

I would forfeit by such a mercenary marriage, and I would not wrong the lady by entering into such an unwelcome compact."

Mirabel turned to him with an elegant smile illumining her countenance, softening the proud curve of her scarlet lips. She put out her hand to him with an impulsive, graceful motion.

"I thank you from my heart, Mr. Valere. I could no more comply with madame's proposition than could you, and you have released me from the first embarrassment of the refusal."

He inclined his head over the white, delicate hand, and felt a thrill of pleasurable delight in hearing her approbation.

Had not Fay St. Orme woven her fascinations about him he might have defined that thrill as an awakening sensation of something more than simple admiration.

And Mirabel, recognizing the nobility of soul which the young man possessed, and with a woman's appreciation of many strength and comeliness noting his perfect proportions, and open, handsome face, did not fail to do honor to madame's judgment.

A link of sympathy was welded in that moment which was the first link of the chain which was hereafter to draw them closer than they could now imagine.

"Ah!" cried madame, "and you would both throw away such a prospect? You are mad—mad, both of you."

"I will not change my conditions, though; think again before the chance is lost."

"I have chosen, madame," said Valere.

"And I," spoke Mirabel, "could never rest as the inheritor of your wealth. Oh, madame, leave it all to the one who has a rightful claim upon it—to the son of Jules Durand."

Madame's eyes flashed a lightning ray, and her right hand clenched itself.

Her lips parted as though an angry torrent would rush forth, but she uttered only a single word.

"Go!"

Mirabel sprang to her side in affright.

"You are ill, madam! The exertion has been too great for you."

"Go!" repeated madame, shrilly.

A rustle like the stirring of the wind among the leaves on the balcony, and Milly Ross slipped away from her hidden position beneath the open window. Noisily she glided back to the swinging casement of the ante-room, and stopped with a gasp face to face with Fay St. Orme, who had shrouded herself behind the damask curtain.

At the same moment the bell in madame's room rung a summons.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 133.)

The Wronged Heiress: OR, The Vultures of New York.

A WEIRD ROMANCE OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

BY RETT WINWOOD,
AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE SPECTER," "WHO WAS SHE?" "RAFFLES," "ON THE DREXEL PROPERTY," "THE DANGEROUS WOMAN," "TWO LOVES," "MIRIAM BARK," "VORST'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE GAMBLER'S LAIR.

PHILIP stood looking thoughtfully into Dick's face, for some minutes.

"My mind is relieved of one heavy burden," he resumed, after a long silence. "I know that Mabel lives. Belmont could not have had it in his thoughts to put her out of the way."

"No," said Dick, gravely. "Her life is safe in his hands. He would reserve her for a fate worse than death."

Philip shuddered. "I shall not rest until the dear angel is found," he said, between his set teeth. "And if that villain has harmed one hair of her head, it shall go hard with him."

"Count me with you, sir," Philip wrung the young man's hand. "God bless you!" he cried, in a voice of strong emotion. "You can be of incalculable service to me, if you will; and Mabel must be found at whatever cost."

"Yes, yes,"

Julia pressed nearer her companions.

"From what Belmont said to Old Het," she interrupted, "I know he has a retreat at some sort outside the city, where he intended to take his captive."

"You do not know in which direction that retreat lies?"

"No more than that it is in Westchester county."

"We must and will find it,"

A hurried consultation then ensued. It was finally decided that Philip and Dick should both accompany Julia back to Slaughter-house Point, and then seek the gambling-hell in upper Broadway, which they well knew Belmont was in the habit of frequenting.

It would be possible, they thought, to discover the exact location of the town's country-house.

They left Julia within sight of Old Het's establishment, and then hailed the first carriage that passed.

It was nearly midnight when they reached that modern hell in upper Broadway.

Philip was not in the habit of frequenting such places, but he had been to this particular house two or three times before.

However, he and Dick now entered the spacious apartment devoted to Faro, with the careless, lounging air of men perfectly familiar with such places.

They found themselves in a brilliantly-lighted room, furnished in the most elaborate and costly manner. Paintings decorated the walls, and a soft velvet pile covered the floor.

There was the usual side-board, where liquors of the most excellent quality were freely offered to all comers.

Near the center of the apartment stood a massive table covered with green cloth, and around which a little group was gathered, at the moment our friends crossed the threshold, in anxious, but silent expectancy.

Philip's eyes were roving over this group, half-absently, when Dick, of a sudden, caught his hand and pressed it significantly.

"Look," he whispered. "There's Belmont himself, as sure as I'm a sinner."

Philip turned quickly. There, indeed, stood the man he was wishing to find, near a roulette wheel in one corner, listlessly, but by no means indifferently, surveying the scene.

His wandering gaze met Philip's at this instant. He gave a slight start, bowed somewhat awkwardly, hesitated a little, but finally approached.

As he did so, Dick leaned toward his companion, and whispered, hurriedly:

"You'd better be a little civil with that devil. Don't put him on his guard at the outset. If you do he may prove too much for us."

There was no time to reply, for Belmont now stood beside them.

"Well met," he said, holding out his hand to Philip. "Dissipating, eh?"

"A little," was the brief reply.

"Humph! You don't indulge in that way very frequently. How does it happen that you are here to-night?"

He looked keenly at Philip, with something like a leer in his bright, black eyes.

"A restless spirit that would not be exorcised led me in this direction, perhaps."

"You don't mean a troubled conscience?" sneered Belmont.

"I mean nothing of the sort," Philip returned, with dignity.

"Pardon me. But why should Philip Jocelyn, the rich, the courted, the envied, be cursed with the spirit of restlessness?"

"Everybody has his share of troubles."

"Troubles?" echoed Belmont. "Ha, ha! I laugh at the word; and why shouldn't you? Come, come, this is the best place in the world to drown any thing of the sort."

"Or the worst," interpolated Philip.

"Humph! Let us not discuss that question, but rather leave it for philosophers to decide."

Philip noticed, even as he spoke, that the gambler seemed absent-minded and at a loss. Did he know that he (Philip) was Mabel's friend, and suspect him of being secretly in quest of her?

The thought came into his mind, but he was at a loss to tell how Belmont should know aught of his interest in the young girl's fate—or even that he was aware of her existence.

What say you to a social game of cards by ourselves?" said the gambler, after a pause, turning as if to lead the way to one of the smaller side-rooms.

"I never play," returned Philip. "I am here in the character of a spectator, merely."

"Ah, indeed," bowing, though with a sneer in his eyes. "Temperate, eh? Perhaps it is just as well, for I must soon be off, myself. I have a long ride before me, as yet, to-night."

He walked away when he had ceased to speak.

Philip drew a long, deep breath. Where could Belmont be going at that late hour of the night, except to his house in the country, where, if Julia's story could be trusted, Mabel was to be found?

And if he was going there, he certainly could not suspect Philip of knowing that he had had any hand in the girl's disappearance; otherwise, he would not have spoken so carelessly.

The young man's heart beat fast and furiously. The instant Belmont's back was turned, he said to Dick, in a low, eager tone of voice:

"I believe we are on the right track. Go out this instant and secure a conveyance of some sort. If that devil goes to the place where he has hidden Mabel, you and I must go too."

"That we will," said Dick, stoutly.

"Quick, quick. Secure a carriage at whatever cost, and then come back to the street entrance to wait for me."

"Yes, sir."

He was too late, however. While they were talking, Belmont had slowly made the circuit of the table, and approached the door. He halted on the threshold to throw a keen, half-distrustful look toward the spot where our hero and Dick were standing, then quitted the house.

"After him!" cried Philip, breathlessly. "I fear he is beginning to suspect something. If we lose sight of him for many consecutive minutes, we are lost."

They rushed from the house. When they reached the street, Belmont was nowhere to be seen. They ran for a little distance, first up and then down the street, but discovered no trace of him.

They were nearly ready to despair, when a close carriage suddenly emerged from one of the cross streets that intersect upper Broadway.

It passed close to one of the street lamps, and by the light thus afforded, both Philip and Dick saw the object of their search reclining among the crimson cushions of the carriage.

"There he is!" they cried, in concert. "He is trying to slip away from us."

Philip uttered a groan of despair. Even Dick Daredevil seemed to be at a loss for a minute or two, for there was no second carriage in sight, with which to follow the departing one.

At last Dick formed a sudden resolution. "Trust in me," he said. "Leave me to manage this affair."

Before the words had fairly left his lips, he darted after the departing vehicle, with the fleetness of a deer.

Philip had the satisfaction of seeing him reach it, and leap up behind, where he seemed to cling with the tenacity of a leech.

CHAPTER XXIX. A LITTLE "SIDE" GAME.

"WE must go back a few hours in our story, and beg our readers to accompany us once again to Woodlawn."

It was mid-afternoon of the day on which Miles Duff had learned of Mabel's disappearance from Old Het's establishment, and shortly after he had paid that hurried visit to Bill Cuppings.

Mrs. Laundersdale was seated in her dressing-room, the composure of her beautiful face somewhat ruffled by the troubled thoughts that coursed through her brain.

That paragon of maids, Jane Burt, was moving about the apartment in her usually quiet manner, deftly setting things to rights.

At last Mrs. Laundersdale stirred in her chair, and fixed her eyes half-entrancingly upon the demure little figure flitting here and there.

"Jane," she said, sharply.

The maid instantly dropped duster and brush, crossed to her mistress's side, and stood with her hands folded over her bosom.

"Madam?"

A faint tinge of color crept into Mrs. Laundersdale's pale face. "Jane," she said, shifting uneasily, "I want you to do me a favor."

"Yes, madam."

"See that the door is securely shut, and then return to me."

The girl obeyed. She was getting used to these confidences of her mistress, and did not feel very much surprised. Without a word, she took the chair to which Mrs. Laundersdale waved her.

"Now listen," said the woman. "I am going to deal very frankly with you, Jane. The time for disguises between you and me is long past."

"I should think it was," dryly.

"I'm going to trust you to the uttermost, Jane. And while I live, and am prosperous, you shall never want for money."

"You are very generous."

Mrs. Laundersdale sat nervously folding and unfolding her milk-white hands for a few minutes, looking very steadily, the while, at her companion.

"I have a little commission to be executed," she said, presently, "and choose to intrust it to you rather than to Bill Cuppings or anybody else."

"What is it?"

Mrs. Laundersdale glanced quickly round, and then bent her face nearer that of her maid.

"Jane," she whispered, "I need the services of two men, who will do my bidding and ask no questions."

"Humph. Such persons are easily found in the city of New York."

"Yes. But will you undertake to find them for me?"

Jane hesitated. "You must go into particulars more fully before I can answer that question," she said.

"You know where to put your hand on such men as I want?"

"Yes."

"Then I will make it for your interest to serve me. You are to manage the whole affair for yourself, and in your name, remember."

"You haven't told me what the affair is to be," said Jane, half sullenly.

"No; I was coming to that. Philip Jocelyn must be taken care of."

Jane started and caught her breath.

"What do you mean?" she cried, her face paling. "You are not plotting to get rid of him just as you got rid of Mabel Trevor?"

Jane, as well as her mistress, be it remembered, had no suspicion but that Miles and Bill had carried out their instructions to the letter, and that our gentle heroine was sleeping the sleep from which there is no awakening in this world.

"No," said Mrs. Laundersdale, shuddering violently. "Oh, no, not that! Philip must not suffer the slightest harm. It is only necessary that his liberty should be restricted for a few weeks."

The eyes of the two women met. "What has Mr. Jocelyn done?" asked Jane.

"Nothing."

"Why, then, do you wish to deprive him of his liberty?"

"To put it out of his power to harm me."

"Humph."

"When you take a dangerous step, Jane," said Mrs. Laundersdale, thoughtfully, "there is nothing like looking out for breakers from the beginning. Had you lived such an eventful life as mine has been, you would see the full force of my remark."

"No doubt."

"You would indeed. Now Philip Jocelyn is likely to prove a dangerous obstacle in my way, and as such must be removed."

"I thought you intended to marry Miss Marcia to him."

The wicked woman bit her lip. She did not like the lurking sarcasm in Jane's words and tone.

"It does not matter what my intentions were," she said, hastily. "Circumstances alter cases, you know. Serious consequences are likely to result unless some restraint is placed on Philip's liberty."

"And yet you say he has done nothing."

"I wouldn't be able to say it long, though, if matters were suffered to go on. He knows much, and suspects a good deal more. My eyes have been on him, of late. He is hunting high and low for that girl, Mabel. He will make some disagreeable discoveries if permitted to proceed with his quest."

"Ah, I see—I see."

"He ought to be shut up, somewhere, and kept confined for several weeks, until all danger of discovery is over."

Jane, the demure—Jane, the motionless—smiled very quietly to herself.

"Wouldn't he suspect, at once, who had deprived him of his liberty, and for what purpose?" she asked.

"Why should he? Even if he should have the shadow of a suspicion, it would seem too monstrous to deserve a moment's credence. Besides, before he was set at liberty, I should shut up the house here and be off to Europe with Mr. Laundersdale."

"Mr. Laundersdale?"

"Oh, yes! I shall," he said, insolently. "You'll give me all I ask for."

"Good heavens! have you come back but to ruin me, Miles—to make me your slave?"

"You are not my slave, Martha, but something far better than that, in my way of thinking."

"What?"

"My banker."

Mrs. Laundersdale started, and bit her lip, at her thin under lip. If glances had power to slay, Miles would not have survived the one she bent upon him at that instant.

Her emotion was gone with magical suddenness, however. It would not answer to let this ruffian know how much she feared and hated him. He was already sufficiently conscious of his power.

"What amount do you demand of me at the present time?" she asked, after a moment's reflection.

"Only fifty dollars. You see I am very moderate, considering that every penny—"

"Peace!" she interrupted, angrily. "Haven't you a single grain of prudence?"

"Prudence be hanged! I want the money, and must have it."

"When?"

"To-day—this very hour."

The wretched woman groaned. "I need every dollar that I have with me, Miles."

"Can't help that," he said, sullenly. "My needs are quite as pressing as yours."

She reluctantly counted out fifty dollars from her purse. This money had been intended for the ruffians whose services Jane had set out to engage. But, as Miles knew only too well, she dared refuse him nothing.

"Would that it were to purchase a rope with which to hang yourself!" she thought, as she laid the crisp bills across his palm.

The clever villain must have read what was passing in her mind, for a malicious smile hovered for an instant round his mouth.

"Don't think you are rid of me," he said, very, very quietly. "You never will be rid of me while you have a penny that you can call your own."

Mrs. Laundersdale's cheek flushed crimson, but she said nothing.

"It does not matter where you stop, so

long as the distance is not very considerable."

Mrs. Laundersdale now gave the cabman his directions, and she and Jane took their places in the carriage.

"Make your own terms with the men you employ," the mistress said, as they rattled through the streets. "Keep a sharp eye to my interests in every way—that is all."

"Of course. But where are the men to confine Mr. Jocelyn, if they once succeed in getting him in their power?"

"That is their concern."

"You mean that they are to suit themselves as to the place?"

"Exactly. Only it must be secure, and retired."

"Yes, to be sure."

"And," resumed Mrs. Laundersdale, in a very energetic tone of voice, "take care to impress on the minds of the ruffians that they are not to harm one hair of Philip Jocelyn's head. If they do, they will be held accountable."

"Yes, yes."

The cab soon reached the spot where its driver had been directed to stop. Here Jane Burt hurried from the carriage, and almost immediately was lost to sight in the direction of the Bowery.

While waiting for her return, Mrs. Laundersdale reclined among the cushions, and though not without an anxious and troubled look upon her face, idly watched the passers-by.

She was dreadfully wondering how all this plotting and artifice was likely to end; wondering, too, if Lucretia Borgia and Catherine de Medici, in the moment when their guilty and wicked schemes seemed most sure of accomplishment, felt one half so wretched and heart-sick as she felt at that moment.

Suddenly, in the midst of her cogitations, an ugly face, bristling with mingled cunning and ferocity, was thrust in at the carriage door.

"Well met!" said a cool, malicious voice.

Mrs. Laundersdale started up with a stifled shriek. "Richard, is it you?"

Then she dropped into her seat again, pale and trembling.

"Hush!" said the man, grinning from ear to ear. "Call me Miles, if you please; the other name is, or at least ought to be, tabooed between us."

The intruder was none other than the clever villain we have known as Miles Duff.

The wretched woman's agitation on seeing Miles leering at her from the carriage door was excessive; but she had soon succeeded in controlling it.

"What do you want?" she asked, sharply. "Tell me in two words, and then go away."

He looked at her with a furtive gleam of triumph in his eyes.

"Afraid of being seen in my company, eh?" he said, insolently. "Can't help that, my lady. What I've got to say can't be told in two words, or even in a dozen."

"Then tell the coachman to drive up and down the street two or three times; and do you come into the carriage."

She spoke in a very faint tone of voice. This meeting with Miles was anything but pleasant to her; and yet she knew no way to shake him off. The hold he had upon her was far too terrible in its nature.

He followed her directions, and in another minute was seated by her side, and the carriage was moving slowly up the street.

Mrs. Laundersdale pulled down the blinds, and then looked fixedly at the unwelcome intruder.

"What is your business with me?" she asked.

"I want your help."

"My help?" she repeated.

"I beg pardon—your money."

"That is more like it," speaking in a low, bitter tone of voice. "I can comprehend your little game. You have found me, Richard, and now intend to bleed me freely."

Perhaps. But, before we go any further, let us again suggest that you make use of my present name, Miles, in addressing me."

"Very well," she said. "I have known you under so many aliases, that one name sounds almost as familiar as another."

"No doubt."

This coolness irritated her. "What has become of the money I gave you only a few days since?" she asked, abruptly.

"For ducking pretty Miss Mabel in the river? Pah! You couldn't expect that paltry amount to last forever."

"Perhaps you will get no more from me."

"No," said Jane, placidly. "I happened to run upon two men who know Jocelyn perfectly well by sight."

"You think they are to be trusted?"

"Of course. They are old friends of mine."

Mrs. Laundersdale stared, and a quiet smile played about the thin lips of the maid.

"Friends, Jane?" she repeated. "Then, biting her lip, she asked, abruptly:

"When will they do their work?"

"This very night, if

MY FIRST CIGAR.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

The first time I smoked a cigar—
Quite well I remember it yet,
I've a knack of remembering things
Which only I ought to forget.

I was dreadfully young for my age,
And wofully small for my size.
All because, as my mother would say,
I too often got into the ples.

I'd invested a cent in cigars,
Havana brand, three for a penny—
A cent in those days was quite large,
But I had not expected so many.

So, that night, with some matches I climbed
On the end of the log and well out
Of the sight of my sire, of whose veto
I had not the least little doubt.

Then I lit a cigar and I puffed;
Sure the fire at the end seemed Promethean;
And the smoke that ascended in clouds
Toward the moon was Elysian and Lethæan.

I blessed the far field that first grew
The tobacco, and said it was hallowed—
Though at every consecutive puff
A mouthful of smoke I swallowed.

And I choked, coughed, strangled and gasped,
But smoked on in spite of my tears,
And so much smoke went into my head
It came out of my eyes and my ears.

I had always considered that smoking
Was the easiest thing in the world,
But I wasn't so sure; still no less
The smoke rose above me and curled.

And drifted all over the field,
Too dense to go any higher;
For, if my recollection is good, I have
I smoked like a chimney afore.

I dropped the stump out of my mouth;
Had something got under the coop?
For the roof was beginning to heave,
Toss and pitch like the deck of a sloop.

I struggled my best to hold on,
Got sea-sick from the rolling and pitching,
So I rolled to the ground with a thump,
Crawled up and laid down in the kitchen.

And as there I rolled over the floor,
In a dazed condition all night,
I made me a vow that I'd never
Though I lived to see barking dogs bite.

Touch another cigar in the world—
If I did, then I prayed I would choke.
I recovered at length, and the vow
I remember—whenever I smoke!

Claude Steele's Scheme.

A STORY OF THE BURNED CITY.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

"It's not going to come to-night, and were it not for the money the transaction will bring to my purse, I wouldn't care a jot if he never crosses my threshold again. He's a bad man, this merchant prince, Claude Steele, I knew him when a price was set upon his head; but how changeable fortune is! I was rich once—now I'm a perfect Lazarus," and the speaker's cold gray eyes glanced around the mean apartment he occupied.

"Yes," he resumed a moment later, "I saw the time when Claude Steele thought every shadow the shade of justice, and every sound the sheriff's footsteps. But now—now he dashes down Chicago's proudest avenues, and the hands that once wielded the counterfeit's graver, grip silken reins. Ah! who in this great city dreams that the respected merchant was once the chief of counterfeiters! And he was coming to me to-night; coming for that which—and he lowered his creaked voice—"that which kills. But ha! the clock strikes nine, and he is yet away. I'll go to bed."

As the man ceased, his hand moved to a dingy lamp that surmounted a mantel to his left, and he was on the point of extinguishing it, when a light rap sounded on the door.

"Ha! Claude Steele," he ejaculated, and sprang to the portal.

The following moment a tall and robust individual, whose features were concealed by a slouch hat and gray cloak, entered the room, and threw himself into a chair, while the old man fastened the door.

"Is my identity safe here?" questioned Claude Steele, glancing fearfully about him. "I wouldn't be discovered here for the wealth of the world."

"I should think you wouldn't," said the old man, turning from his work with a smile, and then the hat and cloak fell back, displaying the form and features of the Chicago merchant.

He was a man in the middle years of life; but his face told of a life of crime, for which, during the last decade, he had tried to atone by living what the half-blinded world calls "an honest life."

"I am in a hurry, David," he said, speaking rapidly, "and we must at once to business. You know what I seek in this hovel—pardon me, your home—and you promised to have it ready for me when I came."

"And it is ready, sir," said the man, glancing at the well-stuffed pocket-book Claude Steele was drawing from his bosom, and his wrinkled hand shot beneath the long gown he wore.

The merchant's eyes followed the skinny member, and his eyes flashed when it reappeared clutching one of the finest of vials.

"Here," said David—David Cumming—"here, Claude Steele, is the green liquor that kills people with the heart disease," and he smiled with his last words.

"Hush, David," don't be so loud, admonished the merchant.

"I didn't speak above a whisper, did I?"

"No, but walls have ears nowadays. Quick! pass me the vial," and in the twinkling of an eye the green liquid changed hands.

Claude Steele thrust the vial into his bosom, and counted two hundred dollars out upon the poisoner's table.

The old man gripped the bills with a grin of delight.

"Do you know how to administer it?" he asked, a moment later.

"No."

"First, who are you going to kill—man or woman?"

"Who said I was going to kill anybody?" cried Claude Steele, feigning great indignation.

"Nobody; but men don't send merchant princes hither for poison."

For a moment the rich man was non-plused.

"I don't choose to tell you who's going to die," he said, at length.

"Then go," said old David. "If you give a woman a man's dose of that two hundred dollar stuff, it will do no harm, and she won't. I'm going to bed now, sir. Good-night."

At first the merchant shot the poisoner a mad look, and then he stepped toward him.

"Do you speak the truth, David?"

"If I don't, kill me."

"Then, if you must know, a man is going to give Claude Steele his obolus."

"A young man?"

Claude Steele hesitated, but at last he whispered hoarsely:

"Yes."

Quick upon the reply came a very impertinent interrogative.

"His name."

"Never!" cried Claude Steele, starting back, while the color deserted his full cheeks.

"David Cumming, you can't force every thing out of me. I'm going now."

"Claude Steele!"

The unexpected mention of his name caused the merchant prince to tremble, and the look he shot at the poisoner was full of fear.

"Ha! I know you, Claude Steele," continued old David, laughing at the merchant's consternation, "and a revelation of mine would drive you from society—from Chicago—to the penitentiary; but I'll forego that revelation if you'll tell me who the poisoner is for."

"I'll eat my heart first!" almost shrieked the poison-buyer, "and I'll stop your blating mouth forever."

The last word was yet on his lips, when he darted forward, and clutched old David's throat.

Without resistance, for old age could not compete with Claude Steele's strength, the old man sunk to the floor, and the frenzied merchant held him there until he heard the death-gurgle in his throat.

Then he sprang to his feet, and darted toward the door.

"I wonder who he was?" he murmured, his mind reverting to the man who lay so still in the room.

"He knew what I have been—ah! he knew too much, and yet wanted to know more. But I've finished him, and now for the unexpected wedding overture."

He opened the door, and with a smile for the protecting gloom that reigned without, sprang from the scene of his crime, and hurried away as if the ghost of David Cumming was on his track.

Suddenly the fire-bells broke the slumbering atmosphere, ushering in the mightiest conflagration the world has ever seen.

"What's wantin'?" asked the Celtic servant who opened the door.

"The city's burning up!" said the man, in quick tones. "Is it possible that you are ignorant of the fact?"

"An' shure we be not. The boarders have all gone to the fire, save one, and he wouldn't go, for sure he sez it bea't much o' a fire. He's the chappie phat's to be married to-morrow."

The man could not repress an ejaculation of joy.

"I will wake him," he said, pushing past the girl. "I know him, and he'll burn up if he sleeps."

The servant did not try to stop the intruder, who bounded up the stairs in the front corridor, and was soon lost to view.

Presently he paused before a door, which he pushed open without noise, and stood beside the bed of Hillarie Harney.

The young man had resided in Chicago from boyhood, and of late years he had not permitted a fire to rob him of needed rest.

When the alarm bells roused him this particular night, he glanced from his window, saw the light far away, and told a fellow-boarder to summon him if danger should really menace them.

This the boarder had failed to do, and all the inmates of the house save Hillarie and the servant were watching the progress of the destroying demon.

The man who stood beside the sleeping M.D. permitted the red glare that streamed through the windows to fall upon his face, and reveal the features of Claude Steele.

Silently he drew the poisoner's vial from his pocket, and inverted it over the sleeper's, and his successful rival's, lips.

Slowly the greenish liquid exuded, and a change came over Hillarie Harney's face. It was the precursor of that sleep which lasts forever.

"Ah, I can win her now!" cried the merchant, returning the empty vial to his pocket.

"He's dead! dead! dead! and so sure as I exist, the fire will roast him besides."

"Ha!" looking beyond the panes, "it cometh this way like a moonsoon."

Then he dashed from the house, and fled with a thousand homeless beings down Hawthorne street. Notwithstanding the

intense heat, as well as he could he kept his face concealed with his cloak and hat.

All at once a hand gripped his arm, and scarcely comprehending his own actions, he permitted the hand to draw him into an alley.

"Claude Steele!"

He started back with a curse; but the hand did not relinquish its hold, and he heard the ominous click of a revolver.

"You didn't know I was in the city," fell upon his ears. "I listened at a certain door to-night, and I witnessed a dastardly deed. I saw you kill my father. Then I did not know who he was, but I know now. I tracked, but lost sight of you, and God guided you to me. Claude Steele, you have used my father's poison. I know it. Where is your victim?"

Claude Steele was silent; but the muzzle of the revolver, pressed against his forehead, drove a confession from his lips.

"In Mrs. Fulton's boarding-house, on Hawthorne street."

Then, with a mighty effort, he knocked the weapon aside, and sprang away.

"Not yet, Claude Steele," cried the man. "You killed my father," and the revolver sent a ball after the flying merchant.

There was a shriek, a heavy fall, and in that alley a human form lay still.

Like the wind, the poisoner's son darted toward Hawthorne. He found the boarding-house in flames, and the affrighted servant told him that she could not awaken Mr. Harney.

Through the fiery element Jasper Cumming sprang, and at the risk of his life bore the lifeless body of Hillarie Harney from his room.

"The man is foolish to rescue a corpse," said the spectators, when they beheld the young physician's face.

But Jasper Cumming did not think thus.

By dint of exertion he bore Hillarie Harney beyond the reach of the flames, and emptied a vial of whitish liquid over his compressed lips.

Presently the eyes opened. The green liquid had yielded to the white, and the physician was saved!

Then from his rescuer's lips he listened to the story of his rival's revenge, and heard also how the cavedropper had witnessed the strangulation of an old man, who recovered to tell him that he was his father, and to point to the green poison's antidote. Then he died.

Reader, there are happy hearts in the Burned City to-night; for a wedding, postponed by the calamity that befell Chicago, ere this hour has been celebrated with the usual beautiful rites. And leaving you to guess who compose the joyful twain, I throw the pen aside.

While the fire was raging in Larrabee and Wesson streets, and gradually approaching Hawthorne, the eastern portion of which was eventually consumed, a man pounded upon the door of a three-story boarding-house on the last named thoroughfare.

His knocks at length attracted attention.

Mohenesto!

Trap, Trigger and Tomahawk.

BY HENRY M. AVERY.

(MAJOR MAX MARTINE.)

VIII.—A Legend of the Dakotas.—The Origin of Musketoos. A Prediction Fulfilled.—Legend of Maiden's Rock.—The Old, Old Story, ever New.—Winona's Last Song.—A Test of Constancy.

THE Red River Indians have a curious legend respecting the origin of musketoos. They say that once upon a time there was a famine, and the Indians could get no game. Hundreds had died from hunger, and desolation filled the land. All kinds of offerings were made to the Great Spirit without avail, until one day two hunters came upon a white wolverine, a very rare animal. Upon shooting the wolverine, an old woman sprang up out of the skin, and saying that she was a "Manito," promised to go and live with them, also promising them plenty of game as long as they treated her well, and gave her the first choice of all the game that should be brought in. The two Indians assented to this, and took the old woman home with them, which event was immediately succeeded by an abundance of game.

When the sharpness of the famine had passed in the prosperity which the old woman had brought to the tribes, the Indians became dainty in their appetites, and complained of the manner in which the old woman had taken to herself all the choice bits; and this feeling became so intense that, notwithstanding the warning that if they violated their promise a terrible calamity would come upon the Indians, they one day killed her as she was seizing her share of a fat reindeer which the hunters had just brought in. Great consternation immediately struck the witnesses of the deed, and the Indians, to escape the predicted calamity, bodily struck their tents, and moved away to a great distance. Time passed on without any catastrophe occurring, and the game becoming even more plentiful, the Indians again began to laugh

at their being deceived by the old woman. Finally a hunting party, on a long hunt or chase of a reindeer, which had led them back to the spot where the old woman was killed, came upon her skeleton, and one of them in derision kicked the skull with his foot. In an instant, a small vapor-like body arose from the eyes and ears of the skull, which proved to be insects, that attacked the hunters with great fury, and drove them to the river for protection. The skull continued to pour out its little stream, and the air became full of avengers of the old woman's death. The hunters, upon returning to camp, found all the Indians suffering terribly from the plague, and ever since that time the Indians have been punished by the musketoos, for their wickedness to their preserver, the "Manito." We have noticed, however, that musketoos are not at all particular in their diet, but present their bills to a white man as spitefully as to an Indian.

LEGEND OF MAIDEN'S ROCK.

A no less celebrated traveler than Bayard Taylor has said that the whole world, not excepting the mountains of Switzerland, nor the sunny, vine-clad hills of Italy, possess more romantic scenery than the Upper Mississippi. Without doubt, there is not a more romantic spot on the face of the earth—certainly not on the Mississippi river—than the crag known as Maiden's Rock. But the associations connected with this spot invest it with a superior interest, while at the same time they throw a gloom over the bright features of the scene. It is remembered as the theater of one of the most melancholy incidents that often occur in the history of the Indians. We give the tale in the simple language of the guide who accompanied Major Long in his northern expedition:

"There was in the village of Keoxa, in the tribe of Wapasha, during the time that his father lived and ruled over them, a young Indian female, whose name was Winona, which signifies 'the first-born.' She had an attachment for a young hunter, who reciprocated it. They had frequently met, and agreed to a union in which all their hopes centered; but on applying to her family, the hunter was surprised to find himself denied, all his claims superseded by those of a warrior of distinction, who had sued for her. The warrior was a general favorite with the nation; he had acquired a name by the services which he had rendered to his village when attacked by the Chippewas; yet, notwithstanding all the ardor with which he pressed his suit, and the countenance which he received from her parents and brothers, Winona persisted in preferring the hunter. To the usual commendations of her friends in favor of the warrior, she replied that she had made

choice of a man who, being a professed hunter, would spend his life with her, and secure to her comfort and subsistence, while the warrior would be constantly absent, intent upon martial exploits. Winona's expostulations were, however, of no avail, and her parents having succeeded in driving away her lover, began to use hard measures in order to compel her to unite with the man of their choice. To all her entreaties that she should not be forced into a union so repugnant to her feelings, but rather be allowed to lead a single life, they turned a deaf ear.

"Winona had always enjoyed a greater share in the affections of her family, and she had been indulged more than is usual among Indians. Being a favorite with her brothers, they expressed a wish that her consent to a union should be obtained by persuasive means rather than that she should be compelled to it against her inclinations. With a view to remove some of her objections, they took means to provide for her future maintenance, and presented to the warrior all that, in their simple mode of living, an Indian might covet. About that time a party was formed to ascend from the village to Lake Pepin, in order to lay in a store of the blue clay which is found upon its banks, and which is used by the Indians as a pigment.

"Winona and her friends were of the company. It was on the very day that they visited the lake that her brothers offered their presents to the warrior. Encouraged by these, he again addressed her, but with the same ill success. Vexed at what they deemed an unjustifiable obstinacy on her part, her parents remonstrated in strong language, and even used threats to compel her into obedience.

"Well," said Winona, 'you will drive me to despair: I said I loved him not. I could not live with him; I wished to remain a maiden; but you would not. You say you love me; that you are my father and brothers, my relatives, yet you have driven me from the only man with whom I wish to be united; you have compelled him to withdraw from the village; alone he now ranges through the forest, with no one to assist him, none to spread his blanket, none to build his lodge, none to wait on him; yet he was the man of my choice. Is this your love? But it even appears that this is not enough: you would have me do more: you would have me rejoice in his absence; you wish me to unite with another man, with one whom I do not love, with whom I never can be happy. Since this is your love, let it be so: but soon you will have neither daughter, nor sister, nor relation, to torment with your false professions of affection.' As she uttered these words, she withdrew, and her parents, heedless of her complaints, decreed that that very day Winona should be united to the warrior.

"While all were engaged in busy preparations for the festival, she wound her way to the top of the hill: when she reached the summit, she called with a loud voice to her friends below; she upbraided them for their cruelty to herself and her lover. 'You,' said she, 'were not satisfied with opposing my union with the man whom I had chosen; you endeavored by deceitful words to make me faithless to him, but when you found me resolved upon remaining single, you dared to threaten me: you knew me not if you thought that I could be terrified into obedience: you shall soon see how well I can defeat your designs.'

"She then commenced to sing her dirge: the light wind which blew at the time wafted the words toward the spot where her friends were: they immediately rushed, some toward the summit of the hill to stop her, others to the foot of the precipice to receive her in their arms, while all, with tears in their eyes, entreated her to desist from her fatal purpose: her father promised that no compulsive measures should be resorted to. But she was resolved, and as she concluded the words of her song, she threw herself from the precipice, and fell a lifeless corpse, near her distressed friends.

"Thus has this spot acquired a melancholy celebrity; it is still called the Maiden's Rock, and no Indian passes near it without involuntarily casting his eyes toward the giddy height, to contemplate the place whence this unfortunate girl fell, a victim to the cruelty of her unrelenting parents.

"This tragedy was enacted many years ago. But we are told that 'there were in the circumstances of this case several conditions which tended to impart to it a peculiar interest.' The one, which has been a favorite in her tribe, the warrior whom her parents had selected was one of note; her untimely end was a public one; many were the witnesses to it; it was impressive in the highest degree; the romantic situation of the spot, which may be thought to have had some influence over the mind of a young and enthusiastic female, must have had a corresponding effect upon those who witnessed it."

It did produce an indelible impression upon its witnesses; and the Indian who has even received the strange tale from others relates it with deep and unaffected feeling. It is one of those cases that show how completely the savage is swayed by passion, and presents at the same time a test of its sincerity and constancy.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 129.)

THE SATURDAY JOURNAL is unsurpassed by the brilliancy, power and novelty of its Serials; it is what the best judges say of it.

How an Indian Commits Suicide.

Some time since an Indian by the name of Solomon Sau-ba, was found lying in the road, near the Coldwater bridge, in the vicinity of Mount Pleasant, Mich., with a fatal wound in the throat. He was brought to the village, and a post-mortem examination held. It appears from the testimony that he left home about daylight, to go to a camp of hunters on the Pine river, near Millbrook. He had gone about four miles from home, on the direct route to his destination. When found, his body was yet warm, but life was extinct. It seems that he unsheathed his knife, which is a bowie, with a blade about eight inches long and one-and-a-half wide, and with one heavy stroke thrust it into his neck, just above the breast-bone, the knife passing downward and a trifle to the left, to the depth of about five inches, and inflicting a wound in the aorta, about one-half an inch wide. The blood in the road indicated that he had walked about six rods after the fatal stab before he fell. He had sheathed the knife and held it in his right hand, his hand resting on his breast. There were no signs of a scuffle, and no traces of foul play.